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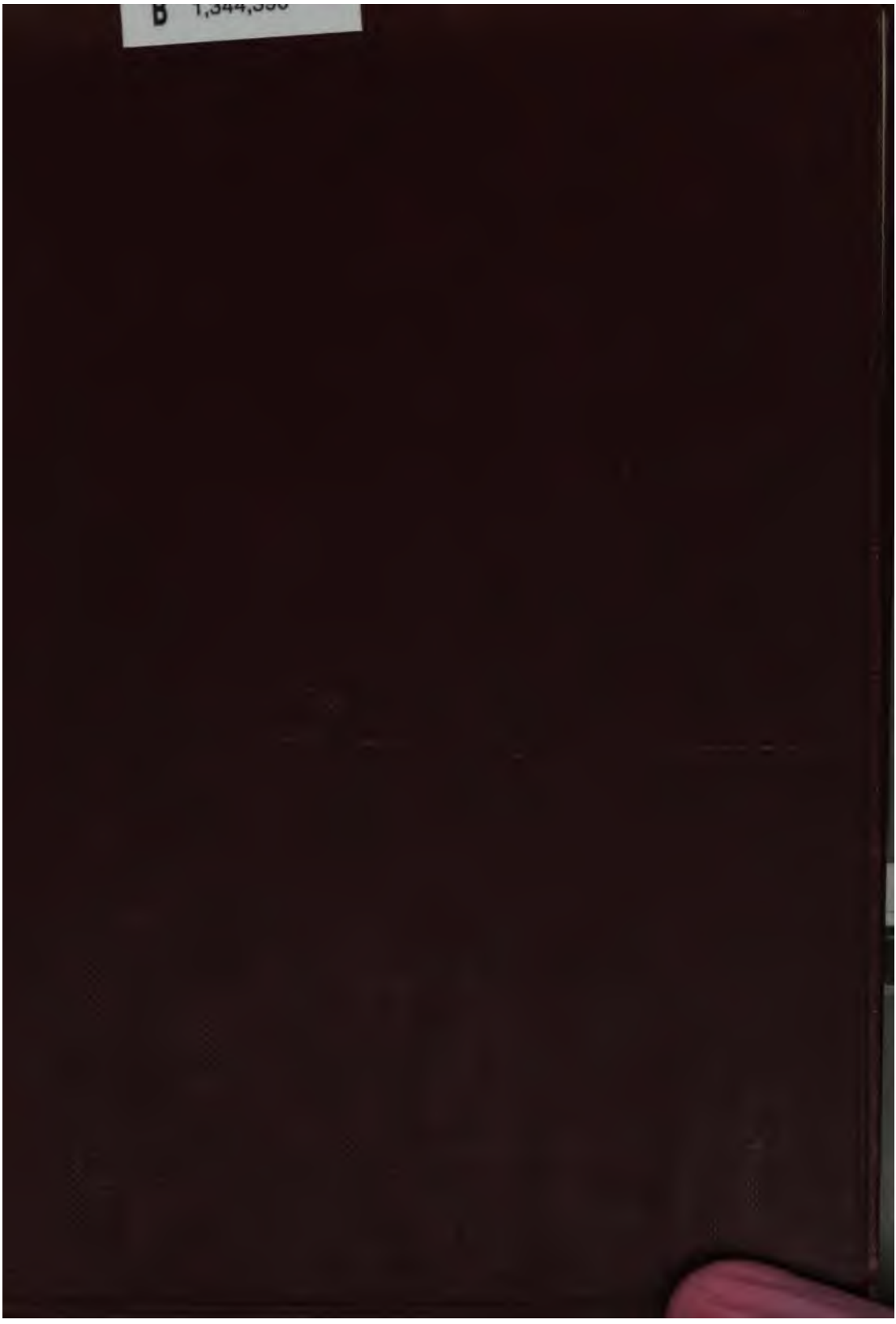

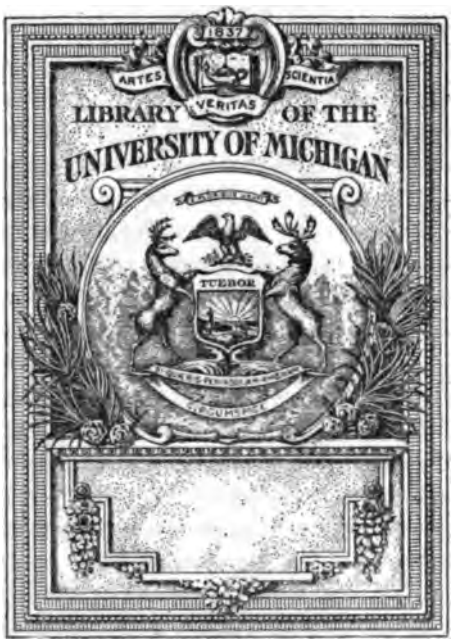
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THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

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THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS:

BEING A COLLECTION OF BULGARIAN FOLK-SONGS AND PROVERBS, HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME RENDERED INTO ENGLISH, TOGETHER WITH AN ESSAY ON BULGARIAN POPULAR POETRY, AND ANOTHER ON THE ORIGIN OF THE BULGARS

"Song has no master"
BULGARIAN PROVERB

PUBLISHED BY DAVID NUTT
AT THE SIGN OF THE PHŒNIX
LONG ACRE, LONDON 1904

TO

DR. STROSSMAYER

BISHOP OF DJAKOVO

Great Bishop, who didst dedicate thy day
To God and to the godliness of man,
Who wast not weary thro' the dark to scan
For the dim promise of a golden ray—
Thy soul was stricken when the Sultan's sway
These children of the mountains overran,
And from Bulgaria's soul 'twas thine to fan
What of old music in the darkness lay.

To thee we dedicate this book of grief
And gladness which informed a people's heart,
Saved from those centuries that were too brief
To cast upon them Time's victorious dart,
And from these gloomy days of unbelief
Whence all delight of music doth depart.

H. B.

387221

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

One circumstance, one of the few, which pardons a preface is when three people have come together to write a book about the Bulgars.

Dr. Dillon and I had intended to go back to Spain and in the sun-kissed province of Murcia to wallow through the Middle Ages. Then rose the Macedonians and changed our schemes. They called us to Sofia, to the frontier, and while we were in that incongruous, little capital—awaiting hostilities—I sauntered one day into the National Library, made the acquaintance of Pencho Slaveikoff, and in ten minutes had planned this book.

Slaveikoff is the caged lion of Sofia. Great, massive shoulders, a massive head, swarthy with beard of black and silver (though the poet is under forty), a brow that sets one thinking, and eyes—eyes weary with the world's trouble, darkling eyes, eyes of the twilit woods, then of a woodland faun, eyes that lure you and dance away from you, eyes that laugh at you and their owner, unbearable eyes. Slaveikoff is the figure of revolt. As he walks painfully through the town—for his feet are unwilling travellers—he longs with a fierce desire to be

where no mans knows him. The wary natives of Ecclefechan have in their time been heard to reply: "Which Mr. Carlyle's house?" and Dorking cab-drivers have been very human when it comes to finding George Meredith's cottage. Other conditions prevail in Sofia, for if a cabman has driven you once he will, whenever you meet him, take off his hat to you with affection and solicitude. This is well; and in a picturesque eating-shop, where the food is rather inimical to life, I have encountered scores of brigands, quiet, keen-eyed, unshaven gentlemen (decorously wintering in Sofia), men far more closely acquainted with Macedonian goat-paths than with literature, and yet when Pencho Slaveikoff enters they hail him: "Our Poet!" His fame surpasses even that of a certain young, sallow insurgent who thrice has traversed Macedonia, who toys with a bomb in the morning, with a doggerel in the afternoon, and is chanted freely in the market-place. So then Slaveikoff is caught in the net of profitless talk and he chafes thereat. But the passion of revolt was in his blood, it burns in the poems he wrote in Germany, whither the spirit of Nietzsche summoned him. In that series of remarkable poems he celebrates Beethoven, Lenau, Shelley, Nietzsche, Michel Angelo —men who wrung great things out of anguish. But Slaveikoff has also concerned himself with the popular minstrels of his own country, and to such good effect that every variation of every song is familiar to him. As for those in our collection, this

is the process which each of them underwent: after Slaveikoff had given a discursive and charmingly allusive translation into German, we debated—not always, I confess, without ferocity—as to whether we should include it. If the objections were overcome Slaveikoff gave a more accurate rendering and in order that I should preserve the metre, with its accentuation, he spoke in Bulgarian various lines which I took down phonetically. But, apart from the limits of language, it is a perilous affair to translate the half-lights and subtleties of poetry, and one of the paramount joys of our work was the result of our limitations. Whenever we came to a passage that was at all recondite, we set about the conquest of it by means of metaphor and illustrative anecdote and fearless flights of imagination. With the proverbs one had to be more captious, for a large proportion, owing to the centuries of Turkish rule, would fail to gratify even the daughter of Mrs. Grundy. Slaveikoff's introductory essay was in every way more prosaic. It was written by him and removed by a burglar—so diligent is the local pursuit of wisdom; it was written again and passed to three or four people by whom, as energy served them, it was transformed into German, a language of which some of them were not ignorant. One after another their manuscripts were sent to me—for I was no longer in Bulgaria—and if any reader take umbrage in a word or a fact, a scathing comment or contorted views in our essay as it now appears, I beg he will

place it to the discredit of that necessary drudge, the translator.

One feat, however, remains unattempted. Slaveikoff was anxious that the two parables of his essay should be rendered in dialect or, at all events, in popular parlance. We can of course gaze more deeply into the souls of men whose language, however uncouth, is their own; we have or should have a repugnance against those who pay a servile court to dictionaries, even if they rise to be, as Lowell puts it, 'the lackeys of fine phrases.' And yet we must often dispense with all the delights of dialect. I grant even that it may be, as in Burns, an invaluable prop to the humour, but when we come to translation—alas! how shall it be done? Slaveikoff, however, had very much the courage of his opinions, for he sent me these two parables in the most unmitigated Suabian German. It would have been possible, I suppose, and even exhilarating to transmute the Suabian German into Wessex English, but —a manuscript once fell into my hands, a manuscript that I shall not forget. It was in most respects a blameless melodrama, having for its hero a youthful Englishman in Brittany and for its villain a cunning pilot whose daughter, being the heroine, was loved by the young man. It is clearly desirable in a tale of this kind that the villain's vocabulary should be both rich and strange, but as our authoress had at her command no more lurid word than "parbleu" she strove to make the villain villainous and

to congeal the reader's blood by laying ruthless hands upon each aspirate. Her enterprise did not encourage me and parables should not be tampered with, and—*faute de mieux*—I have presented them in English comparatively undefiled.

Poets are—I suppose like most people—out of sympathy with their environment. A sorrow comes to man and brings a tear into his eye; a poet sees the sorrows of the world and the tears are in his heart. But it is curiously pathetic to see Pencho Slaveikoff chained to the smallness of Sofia, whereas he resembles an erudite professor with whom some one —I forget whether it was myself—ascended a mountain in Switzerland. After four or five hours of silence tempered with monasyllabic directions the summit was gained, the professor sat down and, "Now," said he, "let us talk of something sensible, such as the Identity of the Individual." Slaveikoff spends most of his time at the National Library (which is what one would expect it to be), at the Turkish baths behind the old mosque, at the café playing furious games of chess with a political 'educator' (who makes a progress through the country at election times in order, strange as it may sound, to discourage the young idea from shooting), and at his home in the Place Slaveikoff, so called in honour of his father, the great patriot, out of whose literary works, by the way, we have taken the poem on p. 29. [Not very far from Place Slaveikoff is the long and straight and placid Gladstone Street.]

But during the summer he bursts the bonds and lies at some distant farm motionless beneath a hedge. The sun rises, the sun goes down—Slaveikoff appears to do nothing, for he is sunk in oriental contemplation, and there are people who would consider this part of his time to be wasted; then he turns to poetry. It would be well, I think, if the writers of hymns and other optimists were forced to lean somewhat upon posterity; it is not well that pessimists should have naught else to lean upon, for both optimism and pessimism, if unrelieved, become repulsive and defeat their object. Slaveikoff is one of the luckless: although his name, being interpreted, is 'nightingale,' the songs to which he gives utterance are gradually growing more unbirdlike. New lands have old philosophies; they have no time for novel thinkers. So the shadows in Slaveikoff's song have deepened with the lonely years till nowadays, when his infrequent books are printed for some fourteen men to whom they are not meaningless. It was not always so; a wide audience was gained by the *Koledari*, which are a cycle of popular songs after the fashion of those which peripatetic musicians are accustomed to sing at Christmas Eve for the various members of a household. The subsequent works of Slaveikoff include the torso of a great national epic: *The Song of the Blood*, and several volumes of lyrical poems, such as *Songs* (1897) and *Dreams* (1898), which make, I fear, intolerable demands upon the

reader's intellect and æstheticism. But there is behind all the songs a living background of Bulgarian nature—the tawny-coloured plains, the vast pine-clad Ryla mountains, the celebrated rose-fields of Roumelia. Straggling hamlets of grey and yellow, and at intervals a Turkish casement; dark, active-looking men (despite their bulging pantaloons); girls in gauzy robes of blue with ancient belts of silver-work, with coins and red and yellow flowers twined among their strands of hair; children (whose garment is often the sunlight) congregating in the dust of villages or about the little river which disports itself between the cobblestones of the tortuous main street—there is no phase of rural life which is unknown to our poet, for he has wandered all over the country, has dwelt in every village, and is acquainted with the personal history of most of the population. But there is a dreadful example which warns me to be chary of words even when dealing with Pencho Slaveikoff.

Once upon a time Mr. Edmund Gosse, the literary patron of Norway and Holland—powerless, little countries—was good enough to consider Bulgaria. I would not be so drastic as to suggest that any one writing about a people should have some knowledge of them—for the world is passing dull—and Mr. Edmund Gosse, being doubtlessly versed in La Rochefoucauld, may have reflected that there is none we dislike so much as the man from whom we have received a favour. Yet Mr. Edmund Gosse

being invited, or otherwise impelled, to provide an introduction for an English rendering of Vazoff's *Under the Yoke* poured out of an apparently overflowing heart such a prancing procession of adjectives that he may have thought the Bulgars could not but feel grateful. Alas! they may not be versatile but themselves they do know—this being one of the cruel privileges of the persecuted. Vazoff, if not Mr. Gosse, they value with correctness.

Apropos of celestial adjectives, there comes a time when even a heaven-sent journalist raises his eyes and finds them not, and then, I notice, he qualifies an event (especially, in England, if it have to do with athletics) by remarking that "history is being made." One deprecates the splitting of hairs and the laying down of precise activities which can be held to merit this phrase—haply then I shall be pardoned for applying it to Sofia. When in the space of an hour one can be with a minister, an outlaw, a Spanish-speaking Bulgarian Jew, an American missionary (perchance that estimable one who for the first six months of his forty years in the Balkans endeavoured [vainly] to propagate a more evident and patent medicine)—when one talks with such divers men and all are laden with desperate news; when your special correspondent gravely interviews a washerwoman because she has donned a uniform, has walked across the hills and fired off sundry bullets; when Dimitroff with his outrageous tobacco bursts into your room at daybreak to report

that it is rumoured upon good authority that even if the Government do not propose to declare war there exists among the populace quite a tendency in favour of letting the army be prepared; when every other wayfarer is, or appears to be, a spy, then, indeed, one thinks that history is being made. And several of the town's most humble features are an everlasting joy. For instance, one of the Sofiote papers, which is published two or three times a week from a weed-grown orchard, has a chronic weakness for blazoning upon its front page the portraits of the Russian Imperial Family, and it is not possible to tell, without referring to the letterpress, whether the paper is Russophile or Russophobe. And though the prevalence of politics might be thought injurious to the nation's gaiety, there are no lack of diverting characters in the most narrowly political of circles.

It happened that some years ago a dispenser of Bulgarian law became concerned, through patriotic motives, in a plot to assassinate the Prince. Yet while this was no more than an ideal, the lawyer was called into the Cabinet. Not being one of those who suffer from vertigo in a lofty place, he deemed it the part of an honourable man to continue by the side of his old companions. Their labours would soon have been consummated when, by untoward oversight, the documents and all the correspondence fell into the ruler's hands. It would, on the whole, have been deplorable if anything had happened otherwise, for we should never have known how the

Prince would behave in such a difficult situation. Scorning to avail himself of the Sultan's swift but mediæval methods, his Royal Highness gave evidence of magnanimity and of Western enlightenment. He disposed of the documents, by sale, to the Editor of an evening paper. It is not every man who from the materials of melodrama can produce pure comedy. When the first article was published, our worthy Minister could not help feeling the novelty of his position; it was not long before the humour of it dawned upon him. Thus did the misunderstanding cease: the Minister was not murdered, likewise the Prince was not murdered, and all Bulgaria was entertained.

I have alluded to the somewhat complex manner in which most of our book was written. This appears the greater by contrast with Dr. Dillon's essay. Compelled by life's exigencies to be one of Seton Merriman's Vultures, to look upon the world's dark places, his instincts make of him an eagle, gazing towards the light. Therefore in his onward passage he joins the mundane to the transcendental in a manner which parents and guardians cannot too earnestly advocate. Thus when the troublesome Boxers caused him to live his days in the Winter Palace of the Chinese Emperor he spent his leisure in completing from the original a metrical translation of the Hebrew poets; while he, alone of foreigners, was really in Armenia (where in spite of his disguise as a native woman he found the roofs of

houses more comfortable than the streets and water less harmful than coffee) he gave himself up, as occasion offered, to the glamour of Icelandic; while as a monk with the Cretan insurgents he dwelt precariously in a wall, making political speeches to his adherents as best he could in modern Greek and incidentally blessing the Italian admiral—for it was a Sunday when in order to refuse autonomy he proceeded to the flagship and the admiral was a good Catholic—then our friend sought a solace in translating documents, despite the loss of his dictionaries, from ancient Persian into Latin. His present studies were, so to speak, uninterrupted, for his earthly occupation at the time has been during the Russo-Japanese war to send the truth from St. Petersburg.

* * * * *

How different these songs appear upon the pages of a book! We capture them and nail them down and wonder why they seem less beautiful. Poor exiles from the people's heart!

We had walked on a Sunday evening out of a village whose name escapes me. It is a pleasant village given over to slumber and its two inns partake of the pleasantness, for each of them apparently exists in order to prevent the other from being the most dilapidated of all hostelries. There is a noble guard of poplars, and as we looked from a lofty vineyard we could observe both them and a fugitive. Themselves disdained to look, or in the gap betwixt

two hills they would have seen the sun escaping with all that splendour which left the world so desolate. Then, as we turned to straggle downwards, one of the maidens, a beater of flax, murmured in a low, tender voice of the deeds of a hoary freebooter. Tender did they sound to me to whom her tongue was more than Greek. For a while she sang alone, then gradually her comrades joined—all singing on that melancholy note—and as the shadows came thronging more closely it seemed as though these minstrels were the ghosts of those whom graciously the freebooter had slain. The valley was a battle-ground where purple armies overpowered the grey. The village had been blotted out; the poplars were unflinching sentinels. Then suddenly the moon looked down and crowned them with a golden wreath.

H. B.

THE FOLK-SONG OF THE BULGARS

By PENCHO SLAVEIKOFF

THE FOLK-SONG OF THE BULGARS

THE songs in this book have been made by a people who one hundred years ago did not possess a national Literature or one that could secure them some applause in the Bazaar of Worldly Fame. If we follow the foreign fashion of dividing into periods all things that have been wrought or written, and if we separate from the rest such literary work as the Bulgars produced before the nineteenth century, we should indeed be ill-advised if we were to entitle it 'Bulgarian Literature.' Excepting the alphabet it has nothing Bulgarian. Psalters, prayer-books, damascenes — damascenes, prayer-books, psalters, endless as a chain of birds lying upon the south wind, birds that are swept from Byzantium to the Balkan, and little does the Balkan care for all their chattering. Sometimes, though, as we push our way through the long and tasteless menu we come across a more appetising dish and extend a delighted welcome to the biography of this or that vagrant ascetic, shaggy, fierce-eyed, and sometimes of a Bulgar who turns his back upon the barbarous world. Mortal are they like all of us, and sinners, but transformed by unknowing and unknown scribes

into holy men. Why ?—one can well ask and continue asking. Still these religious books and biographies have some value in the present day—for philologists a great deal, for theologians God knows how much. The sole exceptions are a number of apocryphal works wherein we discover both ideas and poetry of a wonderful character. But it has not yet been determined how much of them is Bulgarian. These monuments, in many respects so remarkable, have hitherto been studied merely by philologists. Their history may be compared with that of an O which began to be articulate in the tenth century, was silenced throughout the Middle Ages, and became audible when Bulgaria awoke to freedom —not as an O but a rumbling A from the toothless mouth of an aged woman. All these books are imitations or compilations produced by divers servants of the Church—as foreign, for the most part, to the people as were the sacred and profane affairs to which they brought such industrious devotion. Thus did they stand to each other, strange as it may appear. What indeed could the flock have in common with the shepherds to whom it was nothing but a despicable mob which, to be duly governed, must needs be retained in penury and ignorance and servitude ? Moreover these ghostly men, as well as their successors, made themselves the grim and relentless foes of pleasure in life, in song—yes, even of song itself. They came, I suppose, to pray and they stopped to curse. As for the people, it is not

difficult to understand that they lived a life apart, enduring the blows of fate and steadfast to the traditions of pre-Christian culture, to which they felt themselves beyond comparison more closely drawn. During the fifteen centuries that have elapsed since the Bulgars wandered into the Balkan peninsula, these traditions have been held aloft in days of good and evil fortune and the Fatherland itself has protected them—our old 'Father Balkan,' rough as the hair of a heiduck. He was the faithful guardian at the gate and on more than one occasion did himself grapple with an overbearing foe. It was in the shade of the Balkan that the Bulgar carried on his chequered life, to the Balkan did he sing and sigh, wherefore I think that the book of his songs—in which we behold his joy and his sorrow—should bear no other name than *The Shade of the Balkans.*

The word 'Balkan' should not in this case be narrowly applied, that is, not merely to the glorious troop of mountains which from the north-west set out on their mysterious journey, which proceed through the centre of Bulgaria and hasten towards the east, where in magnificence they tower above the Black Sea, listening to the sleepless waves and their unconquerable song. 'Balkan' is the name of all the mountains that are scattered over the peninsula which lies to the south of the 'white and silent Danube'—and this despite the fact that every mountain has its own name, fair, melo-

dious and intertwined with memories and poetic legends.

The close alliance that has always been between the Balkan and the Bulgars, as well as the part it has played in their history, is a theme whereon in latter days our poets and our prose-writers have not seldom dwelt. Instead, however, of piling up a chronicle of facts that possibly would fail to impress an English reader with whom our history savours of fiction, I propose to give a fragment from the works of a Bulgarian poet, seeing that he tells the same tale in an allusive and pictorial fashion:

"Hither and thither was I carried by Fate, hither and thither in the labour of my days, but always there stood before me and always there will stand the shape of the proud, the wonderful Balkan, for I hold it in my soul's most sacred place. And as a wild boar, when a bullet strikes him, rushes to the darkness of the wood for refuge, seeking out those herbs which shall caress the wound, even so does my heart return to the land of its long desire and my wounded heart rejoices in the sweetness of a song. Then is it drawn to the peaks of the snow-covered mountains which hurl themselves to heights undreamed of and glitter there in grandeur more than mortal. . . . That is the song of centuries, the song of world-forgetfulness . . . A calm-browed night has come. The moon has lit her magic torch, a swarm of suave, shy stars is scattered through the sky, as if indeed they were the text of that enchanting song. . . .

But suddenly before my startled sight the song was clear to me, it was to me as though I heard it sung. Then too the meadows heard it and the woods, veiled in the robes of a night of spring. Tremulous they listened to the song, the song which seemed to them a holy legend :

As the grey shadows of cloud swept over my face,
So did the centuries follow and leave no trace—
Some have come and have gone with lingering feet,
Some have clattered and raged with the battle's heat.
Out of my brooding dreams did they waken me
That I should behold mirth, laughter and tragedy,
For as I looked at the dawn in her robes of ice
I saw the flickering flames of a sacrifice,
I heard a shepherd singing the while he drove
His wayward, wandering flocks through the windless grove,
And in the gloom of a canopied oak I saw
The priest with his locks dishevelled, the father of law,
Interpreting evil and good of the distant ages,
And there he sat in the circle of bearded sages.

So fled the years—the gay to the grave gave hand,
As they, forsooth, in the dawn of the world were planned.

And then came those who made for a distant shore,
The captives they of a dream their bosoms bore,
While those who were condemned to the threshold-stones
Did curse the day, did blacken the night with groans.
Yet some who journeyed journeyed back again—
Of thousands one. Ah ! the dreamers lying slain
Were given life in the song which the minstrel told,
And yet the fires of the heart of the land were cold,
And seldom now did the smoke of an altar rise
To wander and lose its way to the silent skies.

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

So fled the years—the gay to the grave gave hand,
As they, forsooth, in the dawn of the world were planned.

And then I heard the clash and the clangour of fight,—
I looked where storms had driven the clouds in flight,
I looked and saw where blood was upon the world,
How murderous brother was against brother hurled,
And how the hand of a son had seized a dart
Remorselessly to thrust in a father's heart.
Ah! so in death they sank, for a God they died
Who once on a wooden cross was crucified.
Thus over the world did Plague and Famine roam,
In towns, in villages they made their home,
But hollow tree and cave of the mountain side
Were sought of hermits gaunt, grim, savage-eyed,
For whom the world was a place of hate, and they
Groped for a day that loomed beyond their day,
Whence vanities and splendour should be cast—
But it was in their souls that I saw them fast,
Unto the grave were all their longings turned,
Nor heeded they the love which in me burned.

So fled the years—the gay to the grave gave hand,
As they, forsooth, in the dawn of the world were planned.

Then red battalions burst across the plain,
And there is none to thrust them back again.
In bonds of slavery the land is bent,
Upon its life the curse of its life is sent.
The land is dark with the vapour of burning towns,
From every rock the ravenous vulture frowns,
By desolate roads, through the glimmering forest glen
I saw the long procession of murdered men,
I heard those weep who wept at being born,
And those who from the mother's breast were torn.

I looked, and behold the fateful ravens flew,
I looked at the fields aglare with a crimson dew—
Altars were prone and the sacrificial smoke
Rose out of the flowing blood of the slaughtered folk.
So then the years did sleep where they used to tread,
For thus it is when the soul of the land is dead—
The land is forgotten of Time, it is cast behind,
There to foul as a corpse that is thrown to the wind.

So fled the years—the gay to the grave gave hand,
As they, forsooth, in the dawn of the world were planned.

And softly then as the stars to the twilight sing
So sleep came into the voice of the mountain-king,
But there was a trailing sigh and a swarm of shades
Fluttered across the gloom of the woodland glades
And then it was that another voice replied
And that was a sacred voice to the countryside,
To field and woods in delicate robes of white,
Toying with dreams in the lap of the summer night:

Balkan, our father Balkan, have eyes of grace,
Harshly dost thou look from the judgment place.
What of our mothers now, of the tears they brought
To blot away the sins which the fathers wrought?
Look on those who look upon thee from the graves—
Did they live no life save the life of slaves?
Had their children naught save the milk of slaves?
Had their souls no thought save the thoughts of slaves?
Behold the wounds that out of our bosoms stream!
Count the numberless heroes who fell for a dream!
In thy crevasses, there on the rugged heights
We, thy sons, have died in a hundred fights—
But yet we awakened Time and we urged him on,
We drew the curtain of night and the daylight shone.
Now turn thy glance to the queen of the mountain throng,

Hear thou the music of swords, hear thou of songs the song!
Thither the people fly, for liberty lies in chain,
Thither we fly, the dead, to the glorious place again.
Ah! we have risen, we ride from a shadowy shore
To see the fate that our country shall have in store.
And softly then as the stars to the twilight sing
So slept the voice that spoke to the mountain-king.
And as he looked to the gloom of the woodland glades
Away they flew, the fluttering swarm of shades,
The chin of the Balkan drooped and his lips were dumb
And he was sunk in a dream of the days to come."

This, then, is the story of the Bulgarian people told by a poet-historian. It takes us from the days when they settled in the peninsula down to the threshold of the nineteenth century and even to our own times. During the years of oppression, politically by the Turks, ecclesiastically by the Fanariote Greeks, it came about that the Bulgar gradually—sometimes, indeed, with a surprising swiftness—turned to the Balkan that he might have shelter in the darkness of its forests and the depths of its caves. The fruitful plain he left to his political rulers, and they not only caused whole swarms of Turks to migrate from Asia Minor, but, with a view to consolidating the country and ensuring the blessings of peace, they converted the population by districts to the faith of Islam—and this religious zeal was always particularly noticeable where the district enjoyed some strategic importance. At all events we observe the significant fact that the

mountainous regions of the country were for the most part inhabited by Bulgars, while the plains were given over to the Turks, and it was due to these that in many parts (for instance, in the north-east) those of the Bulgars who remained began slowly to lose their national features and their language. Thus it was that those things which are dear to the heart of a people were preserved among such of the Bulgars as had taken to the mountains. Their lives were spent in the narrow circle of the family, conducted after the somnolent patriarchal fashion, so that they concerned themselves almost exclusively with the politics of a domestic world, as is faithfully and fascinatingly depicted for us in their songs. In that simple life of theirs it is not often that an event occurs which is beyond the dull round of every day; there can indeed be nothing but what is coloured by their condition of servitude. The solitary gleams of light are the undying memories of the days of freedom—tales and dark legends of a time that has faded into hearsay, legends and tales that have long been meaningless, but are still remembered by the people owing to the poetry which is in them. The Bulgar did not look merely into himself; he went with open eyes and ears to make acquaintance with surrounding Nature, felt that she was united organically with himself, and, being somewhat heathenish inclined, he gave to her a catalogue of manners that were strange, original and full of a marvellous poetry. He celebrated her as the sister of his grief

and happiness, while in a similar way he listened to the mournful rustling of the woods around him and of that everlasting sadness made the sadness of his songs.

These, in truth, are always with him through the changes of his life, from the cradle to the grave. If he plough or if he sow, if he gather in the harvest—there is no helpmate like the song; it is the loyal comrade of his journey, when he lies with illness it consoles him. The song lives usually in the voice of the singer; sometimes, though—and chiefly at weddings—one meets with the strange trio of violin, clarinet and drum, while banquets and dances are made delightful with flute and fiddle and bagpipe. Only two of these instruments, the bagpipe and the flute, accompany the Bulgar at his work: when he guards his flock upon the pastures and when he traverses the bleak and lonely plain, plodding on behind his caravan. But of all these instruments it is the flute which he loves the best, for it will sing to him more truly than all of them what the melodies contain of softness and of oriental sorrow. Without his flute, 'the honey-sweet,' I think no shepherd could endure that solitude of the parched lands of Dobrudja or the dismal darkness of the Balkan woodlands.

We have at the present day thousands of songs, written down by expert and unexpert collectors and printed in books or periodicals. The first of Bulgarian folk-songs to be published were those which

Vuk Stephanovich Karajich, the father of Servian literature, included in his *Book of Servian Songs* (1815). He was followed by the first Bulgarian journalist, Dr. Ivan Bogoroff, who brought out a small book (sixty-three pages) of similar songs, and subsequently published many others in the various reviews. As for the remaining books of folk-songs, we now possess no fewer than twenty-one. Out of all the crowd of collectors there are three who predominate, and not only as song-collectors but as persons of a more remarkable destiny. I presume that a brief account of these three men will not be considered supererogatory, since moreover their lives represent in miniature the life of the Bulgarian people during the time of national Renaissance. These three men are Petko R. Slaveikoff, Dmitri Miladinoff, and Stephen Verkovich.

Petko R. Slaveikoff (1827–1895) was the son of a coppersmith, illiterate but musical. He was himself in his youth apprenticed to his father's trade and visited Turkish, Greek and Bulgarian schools. His first inclination was to enter the Church; he was turned, however, into a pedagogue, and as such he laboured in a large number of towns and villages. He then became a journalist, later on a deputy, for a couple of days Minister of Education, and finally Minister of the Interior. He took part in the Russo-Turkish war (1877–78) and, as an old man, in the war between Servia and Bulgaria (1885), when he gave his services to the Red Cross. His

life, the life of a man of the Renaissance, is of itself a legend. I need only mention that in the course of his variegated career he was relentlessly pursued by Turks and Greeks, was arrested by them some thirty times, and more than once by the Government of his liberated Fatherland. But never did his lucky star desert him; once indeed it saved his life when he was standing with hands manacled upon the scaffold. His exploits and his services for the national awakening made him the most popular personage in Bulgaria, so that the people conferred upon him the title of 'Grandfather,' which the Bulgars are accustomed to bestow upon the men whom they most deeply reverence. It is not easy to measure the debt which literary Bulgaria owes to him, especially with regard to the language, the present literary language—seeing that he is to all intents its creator. In spite of the close personal attention which he gave to his profession and to the battles of the day, there was apparently no lack of time for a great mass of literary work, which included the collecting of folk-lore and of the material for histories. It was only a small proportion of the latter which saw the light, all the rest having been destroyed by the Turks in 1877. He is considered as among the best of our poets—having been also the first of them to lay down laws for the technical side of Bulgarian verse. We have, moreover, to thank Slaveikoff for the Bulgarian translation of the Bible, which was published by the American Bible

Society. It was chiefly by his rendering of the Scriptures that, as I have observed, he came to determine our present literary language. Previous to the publication of the Bible in Bulgarian it was the disconcerting habit of every author to employ that dialect which for the moment happened to attract him. It is interesting to recall the words in which Professor Dr. Albert Long, the American missionary, has spoken of Slaveikoff: ". . . At any rate a grateful nation will cherish his name as connected with some of the sweetest songs, most attractive stories, vigorous polemics, earnest patriotic appeals and valuable folk-lore contributions made by any writer during that Renaissance period of Bulgarian literature, but foremost among these literary contributions in its influence upon the language and on the moral and intellectual development of the nation will ever stand in my humble opinion his work upon the Bulgarian Bible."

Among the papers found after Slaveikoff's death were an enormous number of unprinted folk-songs. Many of these have since appeared in the collections of Dozon, Rakovski and Bezsonoff as well as in sundry reviews. It was he who wrote down the first Bulgarian epic songs of Kralj Marco, and these were printed by the Russian Academy of Science in the year 1855. A considerable portion of the songs in this book of ours are taken from his unpublished collections, while the 101 proverbs emanate without exception from his two volumes (published

1889–1897). The collecting of proverbs was the very first of his literary tasks; the publication of them was the last work of his life. Four times did he complete it—four times was it demolished: by fire and flood, while the fourth time it strangely disappeared in the office of the Minister of Education to whom Slaveikoff had turned with the request that his enterprise might receive financial assistance. But all these mishaps could not daunt the strenuous Bulgar, and he lived long enough to see the first volume of his proverbs printed; the second was issued by his heirs in the second year after his death. And this collection of proverbs (17,441 in number) is for the present the sole treasury of those peculiar saws and maxims, containing the most certain record of the independence of the soul of the people and of the philosophy which they cultivated —as well as of the intellectual influence which the Turk and the Greek exercised. In the proverbs also there is mirrored more clearly than anywhere else that extremity of individualism which so sharply differentiates the Bulgar from his neighbours.

The name of the ex-cleric Stephen Verkovich, a native of Bosnia, is more closely bound up with the pursuit of Bulgarian folk-songs than is even that of Slaveikoff. This alone it is which gives him fame and notoriety. Under the title of *Veda Slovena* (*Le Véda Slave* 1874–82) he published two big volumes of forged folk-songs. Like Wenceslaus Hanka, the Bohemian, who in the year 1817 'dis-

covered' his own poems in the vaults of the church-tower of Königinhof, so did Verkovich, with the assistance of a village schoolmaster, 'unearth' from the Rhodope Mountains a colossal and most amazing seam of poetry. His purpose was good, at all events patriotic, for he took this task upon himself in order to persuade the world that the Bulgars had from time immemorial been settled on the Balkan peninsula. One cannot but admire the man's energy, for not the most complacent poet of us all will sit down without preliminary prayer to the manufacture of hundreds of thousands of verses, with the sole object of befooling the worthy public and himself. We have still amongst us some amiable patriots who believe most firmly in the genuineness of these songs, because there is in them such glorious proof that all the Greek mythology was plagiarised from the Bulgarian! One virtue, however, these concoctions do possess, since the 'argument' of not a few of them is taken from veritable folk-songs. Of such is the song of the marriage of the sun with the maiden Vulkana. The compilers of these songs—one of which (*The Death of Orpheus*) runs, at any rate reaches, to 852 verses—have gone out beyond good and evil, fortified in their blessed faith of having rendered to the Bulgarian cause a service that can never be repaid. And yet in the *rôle* of Bulgarian ethnographer Stephen Verkovich deserves well of us, for he proceeded with his wonted vigour to the gathering

of historic and ethnographic data, and he caused them to appear in a variety of foreign reviews. But of all his activities the most laudable was the publication of one volume of the *Songs of the Macedonian Bulgars* (Belgrade, 1860), whereof quite a large number are still reckoned as among the gems of our literature.

There has not been, however, to the present day any collection of Bulgarian folk-songs which could challenge that of the sons of a potter who came from Struga in Macedonia. These were Dmitri and Constantine Miladinoff, and their book was printed at Agram, in the year 1861, through the munificence of Dr. Josep Jurii Strossmayer, who for the last fifty-five years has been the Bishop of Djakovo in Croatia. Most of the songs were collected by Dmitri, the elder brother, a schoolmaster in the hamlets of Macedonia, while Constantine was chiefly busied with the producing of them. They were at first written with Greek letters, and here again we have to thank the revered Bishop, for it was due to his persuasion that the book when it ultimately appeared was in the Bulgarian alphabet. The brothers Miladinoff play two of the principal parts in the story of Bulgarian literature and progress. They took up the idea of our national self-consciousness and spread it throughout Macedonia with unflagging zeal and enthusiasm. And in consequence of their patriotic efforts they drew upon themselves the hatred of the Greeks. As it was in the days of old, so it is to-day—and Heaven alone can tell how

long it will persist—but whisper to the Greek the word "Bulgar" and you will see the dire effect. They are the most bellicose word-fighters in Europe, and for them the life of Bulgaria is nothing else than the shadow of death. Because, forsooth, Bulgarian songs have been discovered in Macedonia, a province which in legendary times is said to have been Greek, and because it has thus been shown that there are more un-Greek lands than have been dreamed of in the Greek's philosophy, their breasts are filled with an insensate wrath, and when by some stirring deed they would be held worthy of their so-called ancestors, they wait until the Macedonians are struggling once again for freedom and thereupon enroll themselves, as they did the other day, among the Turkish spies. In this way the poor schoolmaster was denounced by Meletii, the Metropolitan of Ochrida, as a desperate revolutionary; he was apprehended by the Turkish police and was thrown by them into the dungeons of Constantinople. When Constantine, his younger brother, heard of this, he made all haste to follow him, buoyed up with the hope of devising an escape. But no sooner had he reached the Turkish capital than he too was cast into prison, and one fine day a couple of corpses were thrown out into the sunlight. Joachim, the Greek patriarch—whose acquaintance Dmitri had made when he attended the Greek college at Janina—being anxious that Heaven should not grieve for the lack of two righteous souls,

managed to procure for them the cup of Socrates. They sleep in an unknown grave, for the solitary witness of their burial—a fellow-countryman—was on the next day compelled to die. The brothers Miladinoff have their place in the roll of Bulgarian martyrs.

Since the days of this famous collection various other volumes of folk-song have been published, and their number, as mentioned above, is now twenty-one. But only one of them can claim our admiration, and that we may give to Basil Cholakoff's book (Belgrade, 1872) although the newspapers and magazines had already made the contents of it public property. There is in all the remaining collections very little that has any but philological or ethnographical value—variations and variations and variations of familiar songs. We have apparently had several collectors whose wayward procedure has been to lay hands upon a song, and because it happens to be printed in any one dialect consider that an ample reason why they should transcribe it and print it in another. Even the *Journal of Folk-lore, Science and Literature*,* which is issued by the Bulgarian Minister of Education, and is now practically the sole shelter that presents itself for our songs and other folk-lore—even that excellent journal appears to have become a dancing-ground for these Merry-Andrews. Our book consists of a selection of songs from all these different sources.

* Otherwise called the *Sbornik*.

There is no poet to whom these songs can be ascribed, and no one who sings or collects them pretends that he is their creator. As elsewhere, so the folk-song of the Bulgars is the fruit of all the poetry which in them lies, and that, despite our Audreys, is no meagre thing. Of course these songs have gradually become distorted, for they wandered through the centuries upon the lips of the people and, as we have seen, it is only in recent times that the writer has attempted to capture them. But their underlying strain did not suffer alteration. The people, whose ears have never been charmed by the syren music of artistic poetry, discovered in these songs a mode of entire expression, and as you read them you will know what was passing in the soul of the Bulgars during the five hundred years of their slavery.

It is only one sort of folk-song, the epic, that is dedicated to particular minstrels, and these—the crippled and the blind—were probably the songs' originators. They are to be seen unto this day plying their melancholy art at the crossways or in the market-place, and often with the colourless accompaniment of the Gadulka, which is a kind of wailing fiddle that reposes not underneath the chin but upon the stomach. No such conventions are attached to other kinds of song.

It has not been possible for the students of Bulgarian folk-song to fix upon a certain birthplace. We have so far only two theories—those of Pro-

fessor M. Drinoff and of Velico Jordanoff. The former of these, founding his argument upon a single specimen, submits that there flourished a school of singers at Bitolia (Monastir) in Macedonia, while Jordanoff points to the village of Nedobratsko, which is likewise in Macedonia, in the district of Nevrekop. Neither, however, is anything more than an unprovable supposition, and I consider it as labour lost to seek to harness your songs to localities, except perhaps in the circumstance of a song having direct relation with a certain spot. But those which fall under this head are very limited in number. The Bulgar's home is the home of song, but particular places, I think, may be somewhat more sedulously addicted to the conceiving and singing of a particular class of song. If in this light we consider the matter, it would be practicable to divide Bulgaria (ignoring the present political confines) into three song-provinces: the north and the south of Bulgaria are the chief sources of the heiduck-songs, the Rhodope Mountains (up to the river Vardar) of the love-songs, western Bulgaria and Macedonia beyond the Vardar of the hero-songs. I say 'chief sources' because in each of these districts one encounters not merely the prevailing type of song but many others which are common to the whole country. There is a tendency to assert that the songs of northern Bulgaria, when contrasted with other of our songs, fall rather short in poetical power, and that altogether the natives of those

parts are less richly endowed with poetry than their southern kinsmen. There is no truth in this. At all events it should not be overlooked that the northern Bulgar is responsible for one of our most romantic achievements—the heiduck-song. But something there is which certainly lends colour to the false theories men entertain: the songs that have hitherto been collected from the northern districts—and this applies chiefly to those that deal with widespread topics—have a less beautiful garment of poetry, and are themselves of a less perfect stature. For this, though, there are special reasons: in the first place, the songs have generally been written down by men of casual experience; and secondly, they were collected very late, at a time when the folk-song in northern Bulgaria was already in the throes of decadence. The re-awakening of Bulgarian culture occurred at the commencement of the nineteenth century—its cradle was placed in northern Bulgaria, and there, too, the kindling of political ardour made the people delirious for heiduck-songs. And it is public knowledge that culture is the death of folk-song, for it destroys that whence it springs. We observe at the present day that new folk-songs are being created in northern Bulgaria, and this is being brought about under the immediate influence of artistic poetry, which not only proves a falling-off in poetical imagination and execution, but is the herald of grave changes in the very character of the folk-song.

For the impression that the northern Bulgar—that is, the Bulgar from Mœsia and Thrace—has a folk-song of inferior interest, one has to blame both foreign and native students. Their dominant fault is to have generalised upon too slender a foundation, and owing to intellectual inadaptability (which has been the case of foreigners) or deficiency (whereby their native colleagues have been handicapped), neither of them has taken a complete view of our folk-song or placed his judgment above suspicion of caprice. As long as the fair fields of our folk-song are exploited by persons whose flesh is willing but the spirit weak, so long, I fear, will the views be cherished that after each word comes a caesura and that whenever a Bulgarian poet chooses to dispense with rhyme he is imitating the folk-song, since that is rhymeless. In fact, a very fleeting attention is all that our native students have as yet merited—save perhaps with regard to folk-lore pure and simple. The same applies to our foreign friends who regale us with fantastic information and with statements that are unadorned by truth. Of such, for instance, are those which Karl Emil Franzos champions (*Deutsche Dichtung*, 1896, ix–xi), as also a good many of the notions of Georg Rosen (*Bulgarische Volkslieder*, Leipzig, 1875), and of Adolf Strausz (*Bulgarische Volksdichtungen*, Wien-Leipzig, 1895), and so, too, the earlier opinions of Auguste Dozon (*Chansons populaires bulgares*, Paris, 1895). As we study the remarks of these different authors,

we cannot help being struck here and there by one that is apposite, while not a few of their songs have been well translated and quite well chosen. But on the whole these gentlemen are but stolid showmen, and with the greater portion of their songs by no means inculcate the beauties of Bulgarian poetry. They have merely given to folk-lorists who are unacquainted with the Bulgarian language the wherewithal for many a clattering battle. The most satisfying translations into German are those of Georg Adam (*Aus fremden Zungen*, 1903, vol. 14). Each of the few songs selected by him is of poetical merit. This, I may say, has been the end before us: not pandering to the dryasdust, nor taking the poetic license of Macpherson, but endeavouring, as man will not cease from endeavouring, to gain for the things which are dear to him some hospitality in other hearts.

The *motif* and the subject of Bulgarian folk-song frequently astonish us on account of their venerable age. A certain number of them appear to date from classical times, a phenomenon to which scientific investigators have more than once alluded. I would not venture to suggest that the form wherein these *motifs* and subjects are preserved can itself, too, perpetuate so distant an epoch, for the songs have naturally undergone a change in accordance with the changes of language and of the poetical mood of the minstrel by whom they were inherited from one generation and handed down to another. So then,

answering to an altered condition of things, we have in the songs both external and internal alterations. But, on the other hand, there are some which, apart from *motif* and subject, are of obvious antiquity. Thus I believe that if the beautiful *Hymn to the Spring* had been made known to John Addington Symonds he would not have given it the least prominent place in the Greek Anthology, so exquisite is its concreteness and so consistent its atmosphere. Not a word can be omitted from the poem without injury to its artistic perfection. This is a quality attained in a number of our songs, as, for instance, in the following fragment of a rather lengthy one, where we can observe how the manner and the matter have been changed in applying an ancient *motif* to an event of more recent occurrence:

> The witch knew that a sword was in Stamboul,
> A hero-sword that Marko must possess,
> She leaped upon her brown, swift-running deer,
> Dark adders did she seize upon for reins
> And for the stirrups fiercely-shining adders,
> While for the whip she swung a yellow snake,
> And so she whirled along to buy the sword.

The picture of the Samovila astride of the deer and flourishing a whip of snakes—that is high relief in the style of ancient Greece, while the *motif* reminds one very forcibly of that goddess who undertook to procure a new shield for the Homeric heroes. This episode has been superbly painted by Nikola Michailoff, who is the youngest and most

talented member of the Bulgarian school. Subjects, *motifs*, and pictures of this kind are very numerous in Bulgarian folk-song, and indicate that there was formerly a close connection between it and the poesy of classic Greece. It is possible that some will consider this to be a bold assumption, but I cannot keep myself from making it when I have before me such a song as the one quoted above, or as that on p. 205, where we have before us a troop of shades who linger on the shores of the sunless Styx.

The only system by which we can hope to ascertain the age of our folk-songs is to read them by the light of such similar songs as are diffused among our Balkan neighbours, or else to draw some inference from the names of people and from the deeds those people accomplished. It is shown, however, by casual remarks that the songs existed a very long time ago. In the first place, there is the Byzantine chronicler, Gregor Nikeforos, who is well known for his travels in the Balkan peninsula. One of the things he tells us of the journey through Macedonia in the year 1325 is that his path led by forests and ravines in which he felt the reverse of safe. He says that when his escort of Bulgars and Serbs were traversing places of this description or were halting at the roadside, they gave utterance to sad, monotonous songs of whose very names he was ignorant. We have also the experiences of Gerlach, who travelled through Bulgaria in the year 1573. He describes a dance that he witnessed in the

village of Koruchesmey, where the maidens who took part in it accompanied themselves with song: the actual performers being always two in number, who tripped round in the circle, now meeting each other and now separating. Subsequently when he was at Nisch he saw the Bulgars singing their usual songs as they came back in crowds from the harvest-field. It is to be regretted that neither he nor any of his contemporaries thought it worth while to take the songs down. We possess, as a matter of fact, two songs which are said to date from 1390 (*Moskirtjanin*, 1843, iv.), but their sense is too primitive by far, and their language is not primitive enough. It is evident that they are clumsy mystifications exhaled by 'patriotism.'

The previous collectors of our folk-songs have habitually divided them under different heads,* according to the contents of the song, but in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. Although there are serious inconveniences attached to such an arrangement, I have adopted it, merely with a view to facilitating my description of them.

As our quiescent rustics live to-day so they have

* "A la *patria*, á la *fé* y al *amor* corresponen la gran majoria de les cansons búlgares, peró com ademés n'hi ha algunes que son veritables rondalles en vers, y altres, encara que poques, que semblan trates aposta, per esclafir la rialla, 's poden classificar totes plegades en cinch menes: patriotiques, relligioses, amoroses, rondallesques y humoristiques" (*La Poesia Popular Búlgara*, Barcelona, 1887).

lived for hundreds of years, labouring only for their necessities, surrendering their political fortunes into other hands, harbouring their old traditions. The Christianity that was forced upon them could not hope to drive the purity and simplicity of these traditions out of their heathen minds. The religious ideas and views of our bucolic heathens are not of an elevating character; on the contrary, for we see that Heaven with all its inhabitants, God included, has been dragged down to earth. And there is the frequent picture of this old, white-bearded 'heavenly householder' wandering with bare feet over the world and turning in to visit some earthly householder—to congratulate him on the fruits of his work, and then to wrangle with this or that vagabond. When the Bulgarian peasant has been paying a visit to Heaven, whether it was a matter of business that sent him, or whether he called in a casual way, we have him telling his fellow-mortals of all the sights as if he had been to some neighbouring village, while God is the local mayor, conducting his office in a good-natured and kindly manner. Up there the life is the same as down here. Once upon a time—so runs the folk-tale—it happened that a careless Bulgar knocked against Heaven with his head, so that his head appeared up there. And then this true son of Bulgaria perceived the 'little gods' (that is, the angels) sitting *on the bare earth* and stirring a large bowl of odds and ends for supper. In agony for the death of her child a good mother

curses the Lord, for she thinks that it was His fault. "God!" she cries, "I would that your little gods fall dead." And as it happens to God so does it happen to the Saints. Little indeed do the people care for a Saint's existence or his avocation; and this explains to us the characteristic fact of the Apostles having strayed from the New Testament into the Old, so that the Prophet Elias, that frowning, rough Thunderer, should have some company. There are in the songs a vast array of pictures and stories from the Old Testament, while out of the New Testament only the Mother of God, Christ, and the Apostles Peter and John are mentioned—the last of these being confused with John the Baptist; and the sole events which are narrated are the birth of Christ and the Ascension. These figures of the New Testament have, like God the Father, been quite metamorphosed. For instance, the Mother of God has become a thoroughly domesticated villager, very good at washing the linen of her Child, but absolutely ignorant of any mission. It is most interesting to see how Peter and John console her when 'Mist and Wind' snatch the Child out of her lap. With sympathetic words they confide to her that her Son has been carried to the house of a master-builder, so that he may learn to build a bridge—whereby the people of the world shall pass from this life to the life eternal. So wonderfully concrete an explanation of the mission of the Son of God could only originate with such Saints

as discovered their own mission in the sacred toil of the peasant : ploughing and digging and shepherding the flocks. Such then is the life of our regenerate Saints, while their words and deeds, savouring strongly of conservatism, exhibit the same curious mingling of heathen and Christian ethics as is displayed in the people's own life. Songs of this kind are very numerous, and of a quality just as indifferent. They are wedded, as a rule, to holiday customs which have nothing Christian about them. Only two or three have been taken into our collection, amongst them being the most beautiful and most prevalent exemplar : the song of the last journey of Saint Peter's mother. But whatever opinions are held as to these songs, they certainly formed the sole nourishment for the religious feelings of the Bulgarian rustic, and they do so to the present day, for it very rarely happens that a priest is exalted above his parishioners in either intellect or morals.

The songs that are part of the time-honoured ritual of holidays have often been considered as religious. It is possible that at some period each one of these songs was chanted with a purpose and likewise rejoiced in a meaning, but all the virtues that were in them have evaporated. They usually deal with ceremonies and the manner of their observance, either directly or by comparisons and symbols. Many of them teem with obscurities which, say the pundits, are fraught with sense and with something that will disclose to us the profundity

of their authors' religion. But be this as it may, there can be no doubt at all that the species of song has not only no æsthetic value but is positively fatuous. Perhaps that is why so many students are on the track of a loftier meaning.

Side by side with songs of this nature there are in the memory of the Bulgarian people a number of legends from the pre-Christian era. Yet, like those we have just examined, they do not furnish us with a perfected whole. We may deem them the relics of former greatness, but I am rather of the opinion that they are fragments of what was at one time in process of construction and was never finally achieved. In support of this view we need but recall the historic fact that our countrymen did not build up their own mythology. Just as the mythical songs were spoilt by those of Christian origin, so were the latter in their turn disfigured by the surviving influence of their predecessors. It will not be necessary to point out to our readers that in many a Bulgarian folk-song these two elements—the heathen and the Christian—have come to an amazing marriage. Our songs of mythology have in them palpable signs showing how closely they used to be united with the songs and legends of ancient Greece. It is of interest to know that some of these legends are kept alive by the Bulgars, whereas they have apparently been dropped from the poetic baggage of modern Greece. Such has been the fortune of the story of Œdipus which the Bulgar expounds

with a modified nomenclature but otherwise not differing from the tale of the great tragic poet. Still, as I have already discussed the relation between our songs and those of ancient Greece I would in this place merely add that between ours and those of modern Greece there is a similar alliance, as, for example, in the ballad of the *Ride of Petkana* (p. 197), concerning which the reader will find curious information in the Appendix. Personally I think that the most interesting of all the Bulgarian folk-songs are those that deal with mythology, for they often startle us with their excellence of technique as also with their wealth of pictures vigorously and most plastically conceived. The heroes of these songs are of a semi-divine nature: Samovilas, Youdas, Smeyes and so forth, who mingle with the lives of men, allotting good and evil fate. We have under this category the song of the *Marriage of the Sun* (p. 107) which as for *motif* is intimately related to those ancient abducting legends wherein the gods of Greece are sung. Of these supernatural creatures it is the Samovilas whom we most frequently meet; in depicting their life the Bulgar has lavished the glory of those colours which are absent from his own. Under his gloom what there is of longing, of passion for loveliness, freedom and pleasure, reveals itself in those enchanting ones, in their eyes that are as a southern day, in their lips as the roses of Kazanlik, in the confusion of golden tresses which fall and are scattered upon their bosom even as the

rays of the morning star, in their dances and their revels on the mountain floors of emerald. Stephen Verkovich maintains, by reason of folk-tales which are unknown to me, that the Samovilas disappear in winter and return upon the backs of the swallows of spring. But the songs, as that on p. 119, speak of the castles they build amongst us, and if it is not explicitly stated that they live here during the winter, I think we may account for this by the peculiar circumstance that winter is only mentioned in our folk-songs on the very rarest occasions and then quite cursorily. There is in our songs and legends somewhat more detailed information as to the winter quarters of the Smeyes, for we are told where they dwell in the caverns and uncounted labyrinths of the Balkans. These elemental beings are a good deal less concerned with their own affairs than with those of mortals, especially lads and lasses. The Samovilas are the sisters of heroes and aid them in their undertakings, but the kisses which are on the lips of the Samovilas can be stolen by none save only the shepherds. Among the haunts of the Smeyes in northern Bulgaria is the famous Magul Megara which lies near the village of Belogradchik. It is a huge cave in the mountain Magul and a wide meadow is spread before it. Once at the time of harvest—so the folk-tale tells us—the turbulent Smey rushed down and grasped the most lovely maiden of the reapers. And always in summer, when the songs of the reapers are heard in the

meadow, she steals from the darkness with her little child and, leaning upon the rocky gate, she listens to her old companions, gazing mournfully into the distance.

The same pictorial plasticity and the same perfection of technique are shown in the hero-songs, whose length has prevented us from including more than three in our collection and even these we have perforce abbreviated. They stand, as other students have remarked, on the same footing as the Servian hero-songs, whereof the renown has spread over Western Europe. But those of Bulgaria have not had the advantage of being polished by the skilful hand of a Vuk Karajich.

The protagonist of these songs is the Kralj (King's son) Marko, Lord of the town of Prilip, an historic personage of whose achievements history speaks not, having only recorded upon her scrolls how of his own free will he became a Turkish vassal. By birth he was a Serb but had dominion over a country inhabited by Bulgars, and was invariably called 'Bulgarian Kralj Marko.' This Prince of the Grape flourished in the fourteenth century and was killed in the sanguinary battle of Rovina in Roumania on October 10, 1394, when with his ally the Bajazet he fought against Mircea, the Roumanian Voivode, who was struggling for the liberation of his fatherland Marko sinned like a true Slav and like a true Slav he repented—on the approach of death. Before the battle of Rovina, feeling that he

would be slain he turned to Constantine, the Servian Prince, his comrade and confederate, with these words: "I do implore of God that He save the Christians and that I fall upon this field."

The deeds of Marco are of an extraordinarily vivid character, and incline us to assume that they are the work of bygone worthies falsely placed to the account of Marko. The subjects of this Turkish vassal (for we may suppose the songs to have arisen in the district over which he ruled) were not slow to consider him appointed by the grace of God, and they sang his panegyric for the reason that he as Turkish confederate was able to procure the benefits of peace while Fire and Rapine stalked beyond his boundaries. It chanced to be a very favourable time for a man without scruples, a sort of land pirate, to be called to the ranks of national heroes. What in our time occurs in full daylight was far easier then in the dark night of the Middle Ages.

Our folk-songs do not go back beyond the frontier of the fourteenth century, that is, they do not record historic events of an earlier date. This fact is very remarkable and significant. Hero-songs or epic-songs (as they are also called) can only be fashioned by a people which has national self-consciousness, and that is just what our ancestors in the days of the free Bulgarian monarchy did not possess. We have, in fact, to wait till the nineteenth century before that radiant sun breaks through; before the beams go whirling through our veins we have five hundred

years of slavery. What the world had not shown us we found in a prison. The sole occupation of all those 'great' kings of ours was to 'enliven' their people, and instead of fostering the national energies frantically squandered them in many a vain 'heroic' progress, now to Byzantium, now to Dyrrhachium. But for their people they made no progress, so these have taken a ruthless vengeance and have not dammed the waves of Oblivion. They have preserved for us in their song the names of several prehistoric beasts, but not of one solitary king. They tell of more marches and countermarches than ever the clouds could tell to Wordsworth, amours they give us and slayings galore—not one which has history's official imprimatur. At last this 'enlivened' people seems, under the goad of its rulers' folly, to have become a people of fools; the truth is that it welcomes the foe, as I have remarked elsewhere, merely to be rid of its own scoundrels.

The Bulgars should be very grateful to their five hundred years of slavery. It is due to this, in the first place, that they have remained Bulgars, for the Turkish overlords—after suppressing every class distinction—left them long enough in peace and gave them ample opportunities to conjure up a soul, to generate a body, to subdue themselves to circumstance.

Then and then only the people begins to probe its own depths—begins to live. It looks towards the days that have gone, not the dim, shadowy days,

but those which have lately gone, so that it may find the man who shall incorporate these new ideals. And it is Marko, that old marauder, upon whom they look.

But why should it be this man? I have already mentioned why the series of Marko songs should arise in the midst of his subjects. Let him have been what you will, it is plain that he was honoured for a time in his own country. It was owing to a want of books and men that the people sought for such a Personality, such an Ideal as should contain whatsoever they held to have been in their past and their present life. Besides if a man has the popular suffrage he will not generally lose in favour if he confess to some popular sins. In this way, I presume, the provincial idol awoke to find himself a national god. But as time went on the Bulgars developed in self-consciousness far more swiftly than in culture, and being dissatisfied with Marko they went past him, they left him incomplete—just as the artist leaves this or that work for the sake of those others to which he is driven by the desire of his waxing strength. Yet a work of art, as Goethe says—no matter in what condition it be—is always complete. So too the poetical picture of Marko is, as the people have wrought it, complete—a caricature of the past, but a caricature with a side aspect. And this caricature, leaning over the Pirim Mountains, has thrown a majestic shadow over an entire peninsula, not merely over Bulgaria, but wherever

the young madness of the Bulgars used to send them. Everywhere—there are shown the ruins of his castles, there the blow of his sword on a rock, and there the mark of his horse's hoof. In yonder mountain is his grave—no! not there, for he has never died; he sleeps in a cave near the winding Vardar, as Frederic Barbarossa sleeps at Kyffhaüser. He waits till happier days come to Bulgaria, for then he will ride abroad, joyous and wanton.

He sleeps and he waits! A hero—can it be? Opposite the cavern, on the Vardar's other bank, a pathway twists along, and thence from time to time a playful traveller shouts down, "Marko! art thou alive?" and echo answers, "Alive! Alive!"

The echo of the living answers for the dead. Such an echo is the folk-song, but that only answers for what lived in the soul of its makers; answers only for Kralj Marko and for a swarm of other mad rascals. It answers not for those who dwelt in estrangement, who scorned the popular mob, who flouted the voice of the people. But the scorned has knowledge of scorning, the flouted one is a lord of flouts.

The national self-consciousness of the Bulgars grew, as I have said, very quickly during the years of servitude, and in their eagerness to find an epic representative they dallied for a moment with Kralj Marko—and passed him by. Hither and thither they searched for a hero, at first among Marko's comrades, who, though they may have been—as the

songs relate—his physical and moral superiors, did not hesitate to disregard conventions, as is the heroes' ancestral privilege. We notice that in these songs Marko is no longer pre-eminent. Thus it is, for instance, in the most beautiful of our epics, *The Seven Heroes and the Black Arab.* There is a mine of meaning in the fact that all these heroes are children: Sekolo Detenze, Dete Dukatintche, Gruitza Detenze, Dete Golomeshe, and so forth. It signifies that the people have outlived Marko as well as the earlier ruffians, have buried him in their soul's bitterness, and have turned towards the future —to the children. But other obstacles arise so that the people's work stays incomplete. The first part of the servitude is gone, during which the conqueror flatters the conquered. Now that iron hand is felt more heavily and the people strive no longer for ideals, but for a chance of saving their skins. New sorrows are heaped upon old sorrows, wherefore the Bulgars, having now taken the measure of their souls, peer not into the darkness before them, but into the past, for they hope to find what it is that has urged them forward. Now they unburden themselves by producing that kind of hero-song wherein they mourn with silent resignation—often, too, with malediction—for those clowns and emperors, priests and pirates whose sins were visited upon them. For some have drunk the wine and others must pay the score. So the people take their load of suffering and come to terms with it, and

gradually sink to fatalism, and in this way vegetate till towards the close of the nineteenth century.

A shrill battle of pens is raging between Serbs and Bulgars about the possession of this Round Table of Marko. I myself think there is not much difficulty if one considers the poetical style in which Marko and his gallants are presented. The Serbs have idealised them very highly, have grafted upon them all manner of virtues; have therefore, I submit, regarded them from a distance, for which reason their exploits and their souls' health appear quite commendable. The Bulgars were not so removed from the heroes; they painted more faithfully, more realistically. It is unusual for a saint to have had a valet. There are some sagacious foreigners who, regarding Marko as the Bulgarian national hero, would find in him the characteristic traits of the people. Nothing could be more erroneous. Marko is a renegade, an alien upon the throne, and as such do the people esteem him and commemorate him in their songs. Ruler though he be, he is a foreign scamp, a freebooter, a worthless party—so the Bulgarian folk-songs delineate him—whose prowess lies chiefly in cunning; so too the proverb mocks him: "Where heroes are scanty there Marko is hero."

We likewise reckon as hero-songs various historic ones which celebrate the deeds of that scurvy brigade of Tartars, Janissaries, Heiducks, and Wastrels, for they with their atrocities have introduced

some variation into the dull, eventless life of the Slavs. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Janissaries and during the nineteenth century the Tartars (who came from the Crimea) inflicted such horrors upon the defenceless Bulgars as to exceed even those excesses which the Normans wrought upon Western Europe. A multitude of grievous acts are pilloried in the folk-songs, as, for example, in *Nicholas the Tartar* (p. 130), which stands alone in our collection. A still greater number have not been admitted to verse and are to be found either in the lurid books of foreigners who travelled through the peninsula or—what is so pathetic—in the marginal scribblings of those who suffered. It appears that the miscreants worked their will not merely on the living but upon the dead. We are told in a variation of *Nicholas the Tartar* that he bound his horse's bridle to the coffin, and as the horse began to shake its head it jerked the reins and suddenly had pulled away the coffin's lid, revealing a young woman in her bridal garb. "Who will take it upon himself," shouts Marko, "to kiss the pale one?" No man accepts his challenge, and so that his honour as a hero be not tarnished he does the deed himself and is attacked of a dread malady. Abominations, tortures, crucifixions, wholesale burnings—such are the incidents of those hero-songs, which are commonly called historic songs in order not to confound them with those that have the saving grace of myth. Mr. Bernard was austere

enough to keep these truculent, but otherwise poetical, songs away from the English reader.

The songs which immortalise heiducks are to be differently considered. These men play a peculiar part in all the countries of the Balkan peninsula. Though heiduck (or haramia) signifies robber, it is by no means an invariable rule that every heiduck is a gentleman of easy virtue. We must, particularly in our times, take the word to mean 'liberator,' though our contemporary heiducks, like their mediæval prototypes, cannot always resist other and less illustrious means of livelihood. And yet the people turn towards them, less indulgent than adoring—which is a frequent attitude peculiar to people of primitive emotions. It used to prevail among the Greeks, for they bestowed both honour and song to the men who 'valorously' became possessed of the Golden Fleece. An untutored folk will forgive and even forget so much which is antagonistic to its own principles if only the perpetrators are brigands or politicians or poets—for this way hero-worship lies. There is one phase wherein the Bulgarian heiduck-songs excel, and that is the relation, so strongly put forward, between Nature and the poetising people. It is the simple pantheism. The heiduck-songs which we have collected in this book are among the most consummate of the sort, and—a point upon which it is to be hoped the reader will satisfy himself—they have no cause to be ashamed of comparison with the best artistic

songs. There is *Strajil, the Robber Chief* (p. 95), and the song (p. 201) of the heiduck condemned to the scaffold, who after a free and a beautiful life desires only to die in beauty.

The songs that deal with the routine of life testify beyond all others to the soul which is in the people. The Bulgarian peasant's life is, as I have remarked, more simple than dry bread, wherefore it offers but a poor substance for the weaving of poetic dreams. It will therefore be understood that the *motifs* of these songs are not strikingly numerous. We read of the young man's longing for the maid; of what is heavy, like a mist, upon his heart; of the shepherd who curses his flock because it keeps him from the path of love; of the ploughman who forsakes the field because a pair of dark eyes lure him; of the boy's wild dream which, as occasion offers, shall be told to one who caused it; of love's impediments and of the pain they bring; and of the end of all this love: the wedding. More than all themes, of love's end; for there is little in married life save toil and torment and tribulation.

Lament your fate, O little turtle-dove:
When I was still beneath my mother's roof,
Ah! then there was no cause for my complaints,
And now must I complain more, more than you.
A gloomy covering is on my head,
About my neck an iron chain is hung
And iron weights are laid upon my hand—
The gloomy covering is my husband's house,

The chain of iron curled about my neck
My husband is himself, my first-beloved,
The weights upon my hand are my two sons.

One of the wedding customs in the west of Bulgaria symbolises this after-life in very characteristic fashion. When the newly married couple, accompanied by singing and shouting, come to the threshold of their house, they are met by the bridegroom's father, holding a pair of reins in his hand. These he places round their two heads, just as one does to a beast of burden, and thus he drags them into the house. The manifest meaning of all this is that henceforth the newly wedded beasts of burden are under the yoke of their choice—the most inexorable yoke in the world. The rural Bulgar, whose every interest is bounded by the family, drains the cup of his pleasure in youth, in the long days of carelessness. We may learn from the following Macedonian parable what the Bulgar holds of life from the cradle to the grave:

"When God had finished making the world, the man came to him and said, 'You have made me the man; now please tell me how long I have to live, and how I have to live, and what I have to live upon, and what I have to do.' God said, 'You will live thirty years, you will eat whatever you like so long as it doesn't make you ill, and your work will be to give orders to everything in the world.' So the man said to God, 'Well, I thank you for the pleasant life

you give me, but why should it be so short?' 'Go over there,' said God, 'and sit in the corner.'

"Then the ox came to God and said, 'You have made me the beast; now please tell me how long I have to live, and how I have to live, and what I have to live upon, and what I have to do.' God said, 'Do you see the man sitting over there in the corner? He will be your master. As for your work, you must plough and pull his carts; your food will be grass and hay, and you will live thirty years.' 'Oh! God,' said the ox, 'what a wretched life. Cut off a little from the years.' When the man heard this he waved his arm so that God came to him, and then he whispered into God's ear, 'Take it from him and give it me.' God laughed at this and said, 'As it will please both of you, take twenty years from the ox.' Then the dog came up as well, and he said to God, 'You have made me the dog; now please tell me how long I have to live, and how I have to live, and what I have to live upon, and what I have to do.' God said, 'Do you see the man sitting over there in the corner? He will be your master. Your work will be to watch over him and his house and his sheep and his goods. You will eat the crusts of bread and the bones which drop from his table, and you will live thirty years.' 'Oh! what a wretched life,' said the dog. 'Cut off a little from the years.' When the man heard this he waved his arm, so that God came to him, and then he whispered into God's ear, 'Take it from him and give it me.' God

laughed at this and said, 'As it will please both of you, take twenty years from the dog.' So the man got seventy years and the dog ten. The last one who came up to God was the ape, and he said, 'You have made me the ape; now please tell me how long I have to live, and how I have to live, and what I have to live upon, and what I have to do.' God said, 'Do you see the man sitting over there in the corner? He will be your master. He will feed you with hazel-nuts and other fruits. You will amuse him with your antics and dance about for his children, and you will live thirty years.' 'But what a wretched life,' said the ape. 'Cut off a little from the years.' When the man heard this he waved his arm, so that God came to him, and then he whispered into God's ear, 'Take it from him and give it me.' God laughed at this and said, 'As it will please both of you, take twenty years from the ape.' So the man got ninety years in all.

"Thus the man lives till the thirtieth year the life of a man, which is free; from the thirtieth year to the fiftieth the life of an ox—with the yoke upon his neck he labours and sweats to support his wife and children and does all he can to pile up money. When he is fifty years old he will get no richer but he will watch over all he has earned, will turn into a watcher, like the dog, quarrelling all day long with those who are near him. The slightest things that happen make him surly and pugnacious. From the seventieth year till the ninetieth he lives the life of an

ape—every one in the house makes fun of him; he becomes like a little child or an ape."

Of all the songs which portray the common life of the Bulgars there are none so plentiful as the songs of love. They are also the most poetical—for the intimacy of their emotion, for the versatility of their expression, for their tender melancholy. These attributes undoubtedly cause them to rank far higher than the love songs of such artistic poetry as we have hitherto begotten, for in that there is not a trace of the Bulgarian national spirit. The style in which they have been fashioned not only distinguishes them from the love songs of other Slavonic peoples but also from those of the non-Slavonic Balkan races. We must, in consideration of style, even separate them from other Bulgarian folk-songs, for the crass realism which is a pervading feature is in the love songs replaced by an idealism less dolorous than sunbeams. And when they have traces of realism there is always a compensation:

In the dismal forest lies the gallant wounded,
And to him speaks his sister, fair Elitza,
Saying, O Rale, tell me of your wounds.
Sister belovèd, thus the youth makes answer,
As for the wound which the sharp knife gave me
Verily it pains yet I can endure it,
As for the wound from the slender gun,
Verily it pains yet will pass away,
As for the wound from the maiden's teeth
Sorely does it pain and will pain for ever.

How much more vivid is this than the customary reference to a maiden's eye. The cause of that idealism may possibly lie in the fact that such songs are composed by the young (as a rule by girls) who do not penetrate the gloom of things. In his love the Bulgar is no egoist like the Serb, no declaimer like the Greek, no slave like the Rouman, he is less uncurbed than the Italian, less coldly sentimental than the German. Soft are his words of love and soft are those which he longs to hear. In the maiden of his heart the Bulgar sees the future wife, which explains quite adequately why his love songs are so pure in tone and expression. Even in those songs whose tone is frankly passionate there is the reticence of expression. The betrayal of love is considered by the Bulgars to be God's anathema, while those who are faithful to one another are not divided in death. Thus it is in the *Legend of the Sweet Basil* (p. 153), which is so lovely in form and story and is known in countless variations. In the *motif* of this true Bulgarian song, Karl Dieterich, a German professor of folk-lore, thinks that he can recognise the *motif* of the Greek legend of Hero and Leander. His conclusions are as correct as those of other German savants who piously make up their minds to discover something.

It is different when we come to the family songs, over which dark shadows hang. The solitary ray of sunshine is the joy of the parents in their children: the mother's joy in all of them, the father's chiefly

in his sons. There is repeated allusion to the wife's unfaithfulness, which is the more startling when we remember that in the songs of lad and lass there is no mention made at all of what the community might think immodest. It is, of course, only natural that the diversions of the young in Bulgaria should, as elsewhere, find a playfellow in Satan, but upon this point the love-songs are silent, which proves, I think, rather conclusively what I have said as to their composers. The condition of the woman in our folk-songs is peculiarly like that of which we read in the novels and romances of Turgenieff: while they are maids there is nought so bewitching, once they are married we treat them as witches. The sole exception is the widow, who with her grief-stricken figure is always recommended to our most fervid sympathy:

> O pray to God, my wife,
> I leave you not a widow—
> For know you what the widow's life will be?
> You will be as the cuckoo, desolate,
> That not another bird will greet and hail
> But always looks upon most sullenly.

For the widower there is no such sympathy, and yet a whole cycle of our sweetest songs is consecrated to the widow, to the sorrows of her lot, to her lonely life which is delivered to the mercy of God and man. It is a relief to find this attitude towards a class which is supposed to feel more than others the 'plight of being alive.' In this respect the Bulgarian

folk-songs differ from those of most European peoples, who strip the veneer from their words when they speak of life's caryatids. Realism in the highest degree is what particularly marks those songs wherein the woman wails for her life-companion and protector whom death has dragged away. I should have been happy to include one of these songs in our book—*Lament at the Bier of a Consumptive*—but Mr. Bernard was more than reluctant, saying that he looked with prejudice towards a song which enters so uncompromisingly into the symptoms of the deceased and comments upon them with more grisly detail than even a pathological text-book.

This, then, is a brief account of the different kinds of Bulgarian folk-songs, excepting the songs of children and of humour. These, however, are scarce and bad and there is nothing characteristic in them. The collecting and the printing of folk-songs does not cease and possibly may long continue. But I do not believe that we shall discover anything novel in *motif* or subject, and still less do I believe that we shall be rewarded with anything of poetic interest. Alas! our folk-song is in decadence, and over the new songs one perceives the disturbing influence of native and foreign artistic poetry, which drives the Bulgarian spirit out of Bulgarian song. We have an example of this in the song on p. 121, which is quite in the manner of Heine, and we have on p. 135 what is the rendering of a stale modern Greek song. Our cultured Bulgar of to-day is a

stranger to the folk-song; he does not love it because he does not understand it. There he will find no rhetoric, no twisted emotions, no chiming rhymes and other tinsel of which artistic poetry is more than prodigal. Simple loveliness cannot appeal to those apostates from their own people, to those who have looked at Heaven from turbid streets and from unfragrant quarters of foreign cities. Only two of the younger Bulgarian poets have understood and love and feel the thrill of the folk-song, and these two, I fancy, will inherit the future, seeing that they bring fresh life for artistic poetry and urge it to seek subsistence from the fruitful soil of our fathers.

One of the most admirable traits which these poets have acquired from the folk-songs is the unswerving directness with which they grapple their subject as well as the care with which in its development they discard all save the central incidents, and give to these the poignancy of drama.

The chief characteristic of Bulgarian folk-songs, as indeed of all folk-songs, is objectiveness. The most valuable feature in modern artistic poetry—individual subjectivity—has no meaning whatever for the people, who comprehend and appreciate only so much as concerns them all. It is the people which in Bulgaria, as in every country, scares away or oppresses what is individual. The result is a comparative monotony of outer form and also, to a certain extent, of inner construction, which defects

are most prominent in epic songs. In lyrics, on the other hand, we are often surprised by the peculiar nimbleness of expression, unfantastical but adroit and epigrammatic as in proverbs. Not a few of the verses have been detached and are used by the people as proverbs, for which they have an almost Manchegan partiality. We find in the epic songs a rather severe mode of expression, and this severity reflects itself in the general tone of the songs—which is one of the salient points wherein our folk-songs differ from the Servian, whose fundamental quality is mellowness. In the meadows of poetry, not in the workshops, the Bulgar and the Serb are brothers. The form of the Bulgarian folk-song is comparatively far more varied, while the division into strophes and the pointed endings are evidences of a higher taste and of a more artistic consciousness than is perceptible among the Serbs.

The purely outward characteristics of our folk-song are the lack of rhyme and the singular rhythm. It has every structural variety from the simple distich to the strangest, many-lined strophes. The rhythm is multifarious and highly elastic, wherefore it renders justice to every, even the most capricious, shade of emotion. This rhythm does not adapt itself to the usual pronunciation of the words but to the number of syllables, with one or more intermediate accents according to which the verses are divided into rhythmical parts. The verse of Bulgarian folk-song contains from four to fourteen

syllables, which fall into two or four rhythmical parts. The prevailing verse in the hero songs is that of ten syllables, in all other songs that of eight syllables. And from these general rules there are exceptions which also bear witness to the decadence that has come over the form of the folk-song.

Having now dwelt for a time upon the different branches of our folk-song, it is opportune that we should also take a bird's-eye view. We shall in that case, if we are addicted to generalising, have to spread a wide net for adjectives. Our folk-songs are like a garden of flowers wherein are so many colours and perfumes that of their mingling we have no harmony. There is but one feature common to them, and that is a breath of heaviness. It is the breath of a stricken soul, stricken with the bludgeonings of fate. As in the fourteenth century, according to that old Byzantine chronicler, so to-day is the Bulgar given to songs of an exceptionally mournful nature. The story of our people and the character which that story has fashioned will, I think, reveal sufficiently, to those who are versed in them, what is the cause of this heaviness, this atmosphere of the tomb. No days of brightness have ever come into the recorded life of the Bulgars. We learn from history that they lived in 'freedom,' that is, in the course of centuries they became the masters of their own land, but not of their own happiness. Under those rascally lords, who were alien in birth and feeling, we do not marvel that the days of freedom

were less joyful than the days of servitude. Thus and thus only can one understand the disagreeable fact that when the Turks burst into Bulgaria they subjugated it with ease. The people did not repulse them—in many cases even helped them. The national hero, Kralj Marko, went so far as to side with the Turks, and so did Elias, the Christian saint (p. 217). But Christianity itself brought a strain of corruption into the stricken soul of the Bulgars, for it was forced upon the people to the benefit of their rulers, and was not taken or considered as a moral requisite.

The Bulgars remind one of the mediæval Jews against whom all hands were raised—so that in the shelter of their homes and nowhere else were peace and consolation. Patience, eternal patience—that virtue of the beasts of burden—became in time almost the sole virtue of the Bulgar. The years of serfdom taught him repose and prudence and economy, and retained his mind in the same primitive condition as that wherein they found it. But all these qualities are liable to bring their 'dark angels'—phlegm, faint-heartedness, suspicion, impenitence and cunning. The Turk has trafficked outrageously upon his mildness, the Greek laughs at his ingenuousness and dubs him simpleton, the Serb —yes! the Serb of all people—calls him a coward, even the destitute Rouman, aping the manners of a Frenchified aristocracy, shakes out upon him the dust of his boots. The Bulgar stands there and

smiles ironically, holding his servitude as a merited punishment from God ; he labours and he waits for days of happiness, helping the Greeks and the Serbs to free themselves, enriching the poetry of Homer's heirs, beating the Turks as well as the Serbs, and making the whole of Europe anxious lest he gain political union and secure the command of his destinies. For then, we may surmise, he will be supreme in the Balkans. All his neighbours bare their teeth against him, for they perceive not in their blindness that he too has teeth of iron. And he stands there placidly contented, smiling inwardly, and with dark knowledge of himself and others he ties upon each crooked ear the ring that fits. Of this we may read in one of his parables :

"When God was giving their Kismet to men the first who came were the Turks, to beg for a present. God settled it himself, and gave them sovereignty. When the Bulgars heard that God was making presents they hurried up to get something for themselves. 'Why have you come, you Bulgars?' said God, 'you are very welcome. Thank you for coming.' 'God, we heard that you were presenting the people with presents and so we beg you to give us something or other.' 'Well! well! what would you like me to give you?' said God. 'We want you to present us with sovereignty,' replied the Bulgars. 'I've already given that to the Turks,' He said; 'you must think of something else.' 'O

God!' they cried, 'what is this *work* of yours? Why did you let others have sovereignty? We should like to have it if you can possibly give it us,' said the Bulgars. 'That's done for; take my blessing, you Bulgars, but I won't take back my word. A present I will give you: Work. Now go with God,' said God to them.

"This the Jews heard. So they hurried up to God. 'Why have you come, you Jews?' said God. 'We heard that you were presenting the people with presents and so we beg you to give us something or other.' 'Well! well! what would you like me to give you?' said God. 'We want you to present us with sovereignty,' replied the Jews. 'I've already given that away,' he said; 'you must think of something else.' 'O God!' they cried, 'what is this *calculation* of yours? Why did you let others have sovereignty? We want it,' said the Jews. 'That's done for; take my blessing, you Jews, but I won't take back my word. A present I will give you: Calculation.'

"This the Frenchmen * heard. So they hurried up to God. 'Why have you come, you Frenchmen?' said God. 'We heard that you were presenting the people with presents, and so we beg you to give us something or other.' 'Well! well! what would you like me to give you?' said God. 'We want you to

* By these are meant the European peoples who dwell outside the Balkan peninsula—the natives, that is to say, of what in the Balkans is called Europe.

present us with sovereignty,' replied the Frenchmen. 'I've already given that away,' He said; 'you must think of something else.' 'O God!' they cried, 'what is this *artifice* of yours? Why did you give sovereignty to others?' 'You shall have Artifice,' said God.

"Then the gipsies came to God. 'Why have you come, you gipsies?' said God. 'That you should give us some sort of a baksheesh,' said the gipsies. 'And what sort of a baksheesh would you like?' said God. 'We want sovereignty.' 'That's taken,' said God. 'Well! as we're *poor* we'll be satisfied with other people's things,' said the gipsies. 'Then be poor and be satisfied in that way,' said God.

"At last the Greeks came up to God. 'Why have you come, you Greeks?' said God. 'We came that you might give us a present, the biggest of all,' said the Greeks. 'What sort of a present would you like me to give you?' said God. 'Sovereignty,' said the Greeks. 'Well! you come too late; I have divided all the baksheesh; there is hardly anything left that I can give you. Sovereignty has been taken by the Turks, work by the Bulgars, calculation by the Jews, artifice by the Frenchmen, poverty by the gipsies. So you see there's nothing I can give you.' 'Whose was this *intrigue?*' they shouted, 'that we heard nothing and didn't come sooner to ask for our present?' 'Ha! ha!' laughed God, 'don't be angry; you too shall have

a baksheesh. I won't let you go back with empty hands. You shall have Intrigue,' said God."

Such is the character of the Bulgarian people so far as in their history and poetry it has revealed itself. Desires or deeds of a kind to surprise us or strike us with their suddenness are alien to the brooding, undemonstrative Bulgar, whose servitude has taught him to endure suffering, whose freedom has not seldom taught him to regret the days of servitude. I have said that the Bulgarian folk-songs are born of a stricken soul, and I doubt not that my views will be shared by those to whom the songs are known. The soul of the Bulgars is afflicted; it is not pierced with a mortal wound. It has the malady of a mother under whose heart new life is rising. Consider the heiduck songs which breathe contentment and the joys of life. An important place in these marvellous songs is assigned to Nature, to our Bulgarian Nature, which, though she be harsh and unalluring, yet—in the lovely words of the poet—hails every night's birth of the moon with solemn chanting of heiduck songs. For the feeling which this Nature summons into the soul of the Bulgar we have the following eloquent passage out of a heiduck's recollections: "As we climb the Chemerno a picture most sublime unfolds itself. There is somewhat for the eye to see and to delight in. I love to sit in that little place and raise a Jeremiad over my country, my poor enslaved fatherland. Even my

fellows to whom the life of a man is as nothing, who at all times are ready to pour out their blood, even they when they look from that place pour out the tears which a hero may pour" (P. Hitoff, *My Journey*, p. 149). The heiduck songs! Nothing so pure, nothing so precious has been produced by the Bulgars, and as from the passage we have just cited out of the memoirs of a heiduck, so from each of the songs there blows a gentle breath of humanity and a gust of elemental will and enterprise and joy in all the sweets of spring, soaring out of the close atmosphere of those moods and meditations which the rest of the songs arouse. The heiduck songs are the product of latter days, of days when the people has found its soul, has gained independence of Church and State. They prove that the sickness is disappearing, that the vital forces are stirring from slumber.

During the winter of his existence the Bulgar lay grievously afflicted. Now, having come to the knowledge of himself, and being accustomed to trust in himself, the storms which hover about this new freedom will hardly be able to make him afraid. Be sure that they will sweep away not him but whatsoever Power shall raise them. Storms come whirling before the spring, to cleanse the ground for all the lives which awaken to pleasure and loveliness. The sick one who so long was cast down and abandoned lives now in confidence with himself, not with strangers nor with apostates. He lives

like the wood which is sung in this little classic song:

The wood did neither weave nor spin,
For through the winter she was ill,
But when it was Saint George's Day,
The joyous festival of spring,
She was arrayed in finished robes,
In finished robes of emerald.

PENCHO SLAVEIKOFF.

POSTSCRIPT.

As Mr. Bernard and I were selecting these Bulgarian folk-songs, I was more than once astonished at a question of his. "Is there nothing more beautiful?" he asked. "Have you no songs like the Roumanian?" I assured him, with some energy, that the Roumanian folk-songs resemble our own, since not a few of them are plagiarisms. In proof of this I submitted a number of facts and explanations, ethnographic and historic. I told him that the culture of Roumania has from the earliest times been under the influence of the Slavs: of the Little Russians in the east, of the Bulgars in the west. That it was not until the sixteenth century that the Roumanian language began to win its way to the front; till then it was what Yagitsch, the great authority, describes as the language of Bulgaria

(the so-called ecclesiastical-Slavonic) which prevailed both in Church and State. That the Church retained only one or two Latin words (*e.g.*, *crux*). That the superstitions of the Roumanian people are Slavonic. That place-names are, in the majority of cases, Slavonic. One instance is the word Dimbovitza. That Roumanian, Bulgarian and Albanian have the article behind the substantive, a point in common that is due to the influence of Turanian which was swept across from Russia in the ninth century and took root also in Scandinavia. That Roumanian writers contented themselves till the middle of the nineteenth century with the Cyrillic alphabet, the introduction of Latin characters dating merely from a Government decision of the year 1848. That there is in the veins of the modern Rouman no small amount of Bulgarian blood. That the lives of the two peoples were intertwined for a period extending over centuries, and that among the phenomena to which this gave rise we may remark the similarity of national traits—the dissimilarity of the present day is a growth as modern as the divergence in political and other spheres. That it is not difficult to show that the speech of the Roumanian peasant is to-day almost half Bulgarian, and that his folk-songs as well as his legends dovetail, so to speak, into those of his neighbour. That M. de Cihac frankly admits (*Dictionnaire d'Etymologie Daco-romane: Eléments slaves, magyars, turcs, grecs—moderne et albanians*), in opposition

to the fanatical and pseudo-patriotic party, that in the Roumanian vocabulary only one-fifth of the elements are Latin while two-fifths are Slavonic. That the heroes of Roumanian epics are frequently the same as those who in Bulgarian folk-song and story are held to be Bulgars, as, for instance, Kralj Marko and Gruitza, the son of Novak,* who is to all appearance an imitation of Marko, and this hero, be it noted, is in his good and evil qualities a personification of the Bulgarian people. That upon this point we have the words of Professor Gaster, the celebrated Roumanian scholar: "Il parait être une ballade serbe ou bulgare qui s'est entièrement roumainisée" (*Chrestomathie Roumaine*, Introduction, p. lxxxv.). That, moreover, the songs with which Mdlle. Vacaresco has enriched the world have every claim to our attention, for not one single other collection contains them or anything at all resembling them. That the best collection of Roumanian folk-songs is that of Teodorescu (*Poesia Populare Romane*, Bucharest, 1885), and the fundamental differences between his songs and those of Mdlle. Vacaresco would alone suffice to condemn the latter. That the Roumanian peasant of to-day is not addicted to the songs of Mdlle. Vacaresco or of his ancestors, for which reason Teodorescu was obliged to go, for the material of his

* Another of the 'Roumanian' heroes, Iorgovan (originally St. George), is a foreigner. To be precise, he belongs to Bessarabia.

book, to Petro Sholkan, the famous gipsy. That the present condition of the language has not permitted even Emenesco, the best of modern Roumanian poets and the literary brother of Lenau, to give utterance to such songs as Mdlle. Vacaresco places in the mouths of peasants. But perhaps poems, unlike truffles, should be unearthed by poetic souls, and if Mdlle. Vacaresco's fellow-searchers had been less hampered by prosaic diligence they would not presumably have gathered all those songs which in their form and in their contents are mere repetitions of the Bulgarian.

One day Mr. Bernard came with a book, *The Bard of the Dimbovitza.* As I turned over the leaves I replied unhesitatingly, "The Bulgars do not possess such songs—for the same reason why the Roumans do not possess them. Those are manufactured songs which were presumably built by Mdlle. Hélène Vacaresco, decorated by Carmen Sylva, and rendered into English—most charmingly —by Miss Alma Strettell."

The songs of the *Bard of the Dimbovitza* are a beautiful delusion, and probably their authors yielded, like Macpherson and Hanka and Verkovich, to an excessive patriotism. In order to have all this made clear Mr. Bernard followed my advice and wrote to Mdlle. Vacaresco. The lady's reply was that the Roumanian peasant is practically the most intelligent peasant in Europe, and that in

transcribing his songs she made use of a private system.

The Roumanian peasant has not the remotest idea of these songs: of their form, of their context or of their language. And the *Bard of the Dimbovitza*, so far from being the miracle of unknown bards, whether upon the Dimbovitza or elsewhere, is nothing more than a fabrication of the Merry Wives of Bucharest.

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS
BULGARIAN FOLK-SONGS

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1

THE wind blows and the Vardar[a] whirls along,
Upon the Vardar's bank before the village
The maidens are assembled for the dance.
They dance the horo,[b] singing songs the while,
Their voices—those are delicate, faint winds,
The wind blows and the Vardar whirls along.

2

THRO' the woods he wanders, Strajil the robber-chief,
Thro' the woods he wanders, thro' the green woodlands,
The mother of the robber-chief is a mighty Balkan,
Strajil the robber-chief lives without a care,
The father of Strajil is the shadow of a beech-tree,[c]
The camp of the robber-chief is the tender grass,
The spouse of the robber-chief is a slender rifle,
Wheresoe'er he sends her, there she does the work of him,
The children of the robber-chief are the white bullets,

Wheresoe'er he sends them, there they do the work of him.
Strajil the robber-chief lives without a care;
Wheresoe'er he wanders, wanders he in peace.

3

Host and hostess, we salute you![a]

Rabro, gay, young, gallant Rabro
Rode upon his foam-flecked courser
Over mountain, over plain
And before him fled a stag.
Sometimes did the stag delay,
Turned and cast a glance upon him;
But young Rabro called out loudly:
Vain, in vain is all your flight,
For you never will escape me.
Not in one day grew my horse
But for three long years he grew,
Three years his mother nourished him
And he was her eldest one.
On the yellow corn he fed,
On the dark and foaming wine,—
Vain, I tell you, is your flight,
For you never will escape me.
Then the stag replied to Rabro:
Do not tire the wonder-horse,

Your horse that races with the storm,
Tire it not nor tire yourself,
For you will not capture me.
Not in one day have I grown,
No! three years did work upon me
And for three years was I nourished,
I who was the eldest one.
By this time the chase had brought them
Far beyond the waking forest,
To the field beside a river
Where the village-maids were washing
And the youth called out to them:
Help me, women, be my sisters,
Richly shall you be rewarded.
And at once had they consented,
Had unrolled their strips of linen,
Out of these had made a snare
And the stag was taken captive.

So young Rabro gave a present
Unto all the village-maidens,
Save to one—he gave her nothing,
But he grasped her by the hand
And she was upon his saddle.
Then he rode in eager haste
And the stag walked quietly.

Host and hostess, we salute you!

4

THOSE WHO ARE DANCING

WHERE the Samovilas linger,
In the shadows of the west,
In the place by mortals dreaded
Did the maiden fall asleep.

Over her three Samovilas
Softly flew from side to side,
And she heard them as they whispered,
Heard them whisper words of evil.

Said the first: Behold how lovely,
Cheeks of roses, hair of gold,
Oh, to have her for a playmate!
Comrades, let her be enrolled.

Said the second: Leave her, leave her,
For the mother could not live
If she knew her only child
In our domain for evermore.

Said the third: What care have I
For the mother's lamentations?
All her sighs and all her wailings
Will not wake my sympathy.

Then the sprites become agreed
In their wishes and opinions.
Up, Cvetana, to your mother!
Call the wilful Samovilas.

Tell your mother we shall take you
To the wonderland of fairies,
Thro' the woods and lonely places
Shall we float away, away.

Then shall you be re-created,
You shall float upon the air,
Chant with us in magic circles,
Quaff the perfumes of the dew.

Go, Cvetana, to your mother,
Say her child is our desire,
Then be sworn of our battalions,
Joyfully will they surround you.

And Cvetana seeks her mother,
Tells her of the Samovilas,
Tells her, and when she has spoken
She is dead upon the ground.

Dead Cvetana, lovely maiden,
Lying there so pale and cold,
Dumb the lips, the cheeks are sunken,
Her dark hair is starred with roses.

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

On the grave do flowers bloom,
For the mother brings them tears,
Every night the Samovilas
Float in circles over them

And they call the dead Cvetana,
In the ghostly hour of night ;
Wherefore in the winding-sheet,
At their bidding she arises.

And in wild and whirling flight
Do they rush upon their way,
Over land and pallid water,
Over hill and vale and chasm.

Sometimes on a dreary mound,
They alight and slay the silence,
Shrieking their shrill battle-cries,
Dancing in a rage of madness.

And the wind's bride whirls along,
Vyeing with them in their dances.
But the mother hears and trembles,
Turning in her sleepless bed.

Ah ! she hears the phantom laughter
As they tumble thro' the night,—
Jesus Christ ! be Thou my witness,
'Tis the voice of dead Cvetana.

5

DIMITRA, you are darkly wise,
And as two locks your Pagan eyes.

Farewell! across the world I start
To find a locksmith for your heart.

6

Vela, Velika!
White robes are you washing,
Black robes do you wear.
Is it a mother
You mourn or a father?

Comrades, my comrades,
It is not a mother
I mourn, nor a father.
My heart is so lonely
Because of my lover

With the insurgents
Sallied he forth,
Behind the insurgents
At their home-coming
Came sadly his horse.

A saddle he bore,
Whereon was a paper
Whereon there was written,
Vela, Velika!
Say what was written.

Comrades, my comrades,
Thus said the paper:
Vela, Velika!
Take thou a husband,
Wait not for me.

I was betrothed,
Then I was married
Far, far away,
In a foreign land,
Not of my will.

Dark earth was my bride,
The guests at the wedding
Were Turkish soldiers,
And for my choristers
Had I black ravens.

7

Stoyan was her only son
And she was eager to have him married
That the Turks should not enlist him.
So there came the wedding-morn,
Yet before the day was ended
Stoyan and his friends were taken.
Each of them his mother followed
And with Stoyan's went the bride,
In her hand she carried roses
And she wept unceasingly.
But the sergeant of the Turks
Said to her: Fair Violet
Cast away your bridal dress
And be as your mother bore you.
Then go thrice thro' Adrianople
And go thrice before the host
And we shall set Stoyan free.
Straightway Violet consented,
On the ground she cast her raiment
And she stood in loveliness
As her mother once had born her,
Taking but a handkerchief
Which she hung before her face,
Before her face and to the breast.
Said the sergeant of the Turks:
Violet, you lovely bride,
Wherefore do you clothe your face
And unclothe what brings you shame?

Then replied fair Violet:
Unto every one is given
That which may give birth to shame
And that whence no shame is born.
For myself, I would not see
How the shame is on your faces.
Thrice she went thro' Adrianople,
Thrice she went before the host
And her answer pleased the Turks,
So that Stoyan was released.

8

Why are you faded, O forest?
Your leaves are dying before the summer.
Gerdan, young gallant, listen to me:
I was sore at heart for the shepherds
And most of all for the shepherds' chief
For he bade them to drive their flocks
Over the dancing-ground of the faeries
And to drink from the faeries' well.
Wherefore the Samovila came
And she spoke to the shepherd chief:
You have injured our possessions,
You shall give us recompense;
We want the hearts of your companions
And a drop of blood from the hearts of their wives.

Then prayed the chief to the Samovila:
What shall become of the little children
If you take what you desire?
Leave me, I shall not consent.
So grim blackness fell over the sky
And a storm seized all the shepherds,
Only the chief of them remained
Struck by livid rods of lightning
Which turned him to a marble stone,
His heart into a stain of darkness.

9

MAIDEN, in my heart reclining,
I go homewards from the war,
Maiden, in my heart reclining,
Look you neither up nor down,
Look, I pray you, straight upon me,
I will trace a picture of you
On the woodwork of my gun,
So that I may take you homewards
That my mother may behold
The kind of maiden I have won
To love me in this foreign land.
There is no other like to her,
Her form is like a poplar tree,
Her countenance like fresh, white cheese,
Her eyes are cherries and their brows

Are curiously-woven braid,
Her mouth is like a silver cup
From which no sullied thing can flow.

10

It was a terrible encounter
When the gnat fought with the fly,
And yet the motive lacked importance—
Merely a little lady-fly.
But the gnat became so vicious
That he raised his heavy club
And his enemy fell dead.
Now this happened on the road
Leading to Constantinople
And the blood rushed so profusely
That it stopped the royal troops.
Then a great swarm of police
Came to apprehend the culprit,—
At the head of them the Cadi
And while they were noisy wasps,
He who led them was a drone
And a beetle served as herald.
First the villagers were driven
To the sanguinary spot,
Thence to drag away the corpse
Which detained the royal army.
Till this time the gnat was standing

On the leaf of a roadside tree
And tho' nearly stiff with fright
He fled away to the Pirim Mountains,[a]
The haunt of Hieducks and there he stood
Under a mushroom parasol,
And from there he prayed to God:
If you would let the rain descend,
The wings of all the dreadful swarm
Which follows me would surely droop,
And then, O God, I should be safe,
As safe as a hero should always be.
But tho' his prayer was not fulfilled,
The matter turned out well for him.
Of course policemen cannot find
Any one under a parasol.
The lazy leader hurried past,
While after him the Cadi rode,
And as he rode he meditated
In what words to give the judgment.

11

THE MARRIAGE OF THE SUN[a]

Although she was most beautiful
And though the fame thereof was great,
None of her children stayed alive
And they were beautiful as she.

Now were they four whom death had grasped
And then she bore another child
Which was more fair than angels are,
A maid unlike all other maids
And even as the morning-star.
Then sat the mother long and thought
What kind of name to choose for her,
And hoping thus to save her life
She cast upon the name Grozdana.[b]
It should be a repulsive name
To drive off ills and evil looks.
So then the fair Grozdana waxed
And owing to the mother's care
She did not cross the threshold stone,
Not to the well with other girls,
Nor with girl-reapers to Roumelia,
Nor any work beyond the door,
That so the sun should see her not.
It happened once the mother went
To carry water from the well
And following some dark desire
Grozdana came beyond the door,
Came through the garden, plucking flowers
And then the sun had sight of her.
Three days and nights he went not down,
He trembled but he went not down.
As for the mother of the sun,
She had prepared his evening-meal
And sighing she awaited him,
And she was much perplexed to think

Where he was loitering—where and why.
At last, when he came home again,
She chided him with gentle words:
My boy, said she, beloved boy,
Where have you loitered for so long?
Your supper has become quite cold.
To-day it is a roasted cow,
Also three ovens full of bread.
Then did he look on her with sadness,
With sadness but gave no reply
And when she beheld his sadness
She made speech to him again,
And in this wise she addressed him:
Tell me, wherefore are you silent?
Wherefore did you shine so brightly,
Shine without a thought of rest?
Speak and soothe my mother-heart,
Seeing that you have burned up
Aged people in the meadows,
And young ploughmen in Dobrodja,
And girl-reapers in Roumelia.
Then the sun made this reply:
O mother, old and worthy woman,
If you but knew, if you but knew
The lovely maiden I have seen
Down there in the lower world.
I am the sun here in the sky,
She is the sun there on the earth,
There on the earth, 'midst mortal men,
And if I have her not for wife

I shall not shine as heretofore.
Go, mother, to the aged God,
The aged God and ask of him
Is it permitted, is it seemly
To have an earth-maid for one's wife
And celebrate the wedding feast?
Therefore the mother went to God:
For all your kindnesses, she said,
We give you our sincerest thanks.
But I have something else to say:
The sun is sad and ill at ease
Because down in the lower land
He has beheld a lovely maid.
Now give us your judicial word,
Is it permitted, is it seemly
To have an earth-maid for one's wife?
And thus long-bearded God replied:
Old mother, old and worthy woman,
It is permitted, it is seemly;
And at the next Saint George's Day
Let down on earth a golden swing,
Just in the garden of the maid.
The old folk and the young will come
That they may swing for their well-being
And thither will she come as well
That she may swing for her well-being,
And you will pull her up to you.
This God advised, and this was done,
For on the next Saint George's Day
The golden swing was hanging there

And folk assembled, young and old,
And lastly came Grozdana, too,
And as she sat upon the swing
The sky was darkened suddenly,
A black mist fell upon the land
And it was dimly one could see
The raising of the golden swing;
And afterwards no sound was heard,
Saving the mother's moans and cries:
Grozdana, my beloved one,
For nine months were you at my breast,
For nine months shall you speak no word [d]
Before the parents of your spouse,
This shall you do to honour them.
But as Grozdana was drawn up
She did not hear the mother well
And for nine months she heard nine years,
Which did not much amuse the sun.
It was his wish to separate
And get himself another wife,
This did he plan and this he did
And having chosen him a bride
She was attended by Grozdana,
Who throwing over her the veil
Saw that it was a blaze of fire,—
But from itself, not from the candles.
And the bride spoke angrily:
You attendant, careless woman,
We have known that you are dumb
But not that you are blind as well.

Then at last Grozdana spoke,
Saying: Bride, I am not dumb,
I have not set the veil on fire.
When I was on the golden swing
I heard my mother who enjoined
That for nine years I should not speak
In honour of my spouse's parents
But chiefly so to honour him.
Now are the nine years at their end
And now I speak and say to you
That I am neither dumb nor blind.
Of course the sun heard all of this
And his mother heard as well,
So the new bride was sent away
And it became Grozdana's wedding.

Since then two suns are in the sky,
Namely one sun, which is the sun
And another, which is Grozdana.
In the summer the sun doth shine,
Burning and often burning up,
While Grozdana shines in spring
To place a light within our hearts.

12

Stoyan came down from the mountain
With three waggon-loads of wood
And in front of them he strutted,
Piping ever on his flute.

So he met a pretty maiden,
Clad in garments new and comely,
On her forehead was a flower
And a jug upon her shoulder.

Then the youth stood, hesitating
If he should destroy the jug,
If he should tear down the flower
Or perhaps embrace the maiden.

Such a jug is worth two farthings,
Such a flower fades at noon,
Such a kiss will last for ever,
So thought Stoyan as he kissed her.

13

There on the side of the Balkans
Guarded the shepherd his flocks,
Where are the graves of the murdered men:
There he fingered his gentle flute
And in her grave the sister heard
And from her grave did she speak to him:

Say, is my husband married again ?
Is the new wife more handsome than I ?
And, brother, is she more saving than I ?
And he answered her : Sister mine,
Again is your husband married,
Yes and she is more handsome than you,
Yes, the new wife works harder than you,
And, sister, she is more saving than you,
But what does she care for your children ?
Out of the house full early,
'Tis night when she comes again
So that the little children
Cry as they gather round her,
One for a piece of bread,
One for a glass of water,
And the woman—she curses them,
Saying : " You pretty children,
May this one die of a surfeit,
May that one drink and be drowned ;
You have eaten the life of your mother,
Yes, you have eaten and drunk it away."

Then from the grave did she speak to him :
Be kind-hearted, O brother.
Bring my children to me,
The youngest take in your arms.
And when he brought the children
Into that spot of the Balkans,
Then the grave opened before them
And they came to the mother.

14

EMPEROR MILUTINE AND EMPEROR CONSTANTINE[a]

A son was born to Emperor Milutine,
Wherefore he held a splendid festival,
Inviting all who dwelt in his domains,
However vastly they are spread between
The Danube and the borders of the sea;
And all of those whom he invited came
Save one alone, the Emperor Constantine.

In this way spoke the Emperor Milutine
To Saint Elias who attended him
To Saint Elias who was chamberlain:
All praise to you, Elias, holy man,
But where can be the Emperor Constantine?
Have you by any chance forgotten him
Or did you seek and find an empty house?

And thus Elias, holy man, replied:
Three times did I betake myself to him
But he was not at home a single time.

Then spoke to him the Emperor Milutine:
Elias, holy man, my chamberlain!
Grasp in your hand a richly-fashioned horn
And find a fitting place upon the fields,
Where half a dozen fields are in a row.

Then blow your best and crash into the horn,
So that it reach the Emperor Constantine
And urge him hither expeditiously.

And him obeyed Elias, holy man,
Grasped in his hand a richly-fashioned horn,
And found a fitting place upon the fields,
Where half a dozen fields were in a row,
Then fired away and crashed into the horn.

And when he heard, the Emperor Constantine,
As soon as he was made aware, he came.
Then all did rise, full ceremoniously,
And in their arms they bore him up the stairs,
Placed him at table, at the head thereof,
Yes, at the table having six partitions,
Thus into six or seven parts divided.
They handed him a beaker made of gold,
He took the beaker and began to smile.
When this was seen by Emperor Milutine,
He spoke to him and with a trembling voice:
The devil seize you, Emperor Constantine,
Think you that sort of mood rejoices me?
You took the glass and then I saw you smile;
Is it because the feasters are too few,
Or is the meat, perhaps, not plentiful,
Or do you think my child a mere abortion?

Thus made reply the Emperor Constantine:
I give you thanks, O Emperor Milutine!

The meat, methinks, is very plentiful,
Nor do I think the feasters are too few,
Nor that your boy-child is a mere abortion;
I merely thought a little of our youth.
My little brother, dost thou still recall
When we were little children long ago,
Ah! little children, little orphan children,
Two little farmer's-lads, two little shepherds?

Thou drovest little tender sheep to pasture
And I was herd of little leaping goats,
But, little brother, God was good to us
And out of us he made two Emperors:
I am the master of Wallachia,
Thou, little brother, of Moldavia.

15

The voice of the herald is crying:
Vela, young widow, turn up your sleeves,—
The Turkish army approaches,
Make ready the food and the beds,
Bring the wine up from the cellar.
You'll carry no weight in your heart,
Whatever you carry beneath it.

And thus the young widow replies:
Herald, warn me no more,
Their ways are well known to me,

Their troops have dwelt in my house
And they have left it as waste,
As waste as my widowed heart.

16

NEDA, cast down your veil,
In front of your white face,
For that white face of yours
The sun shall never burn.
My loving friends,
You tease me, I suppose,
To get some fun from me.
Well then, my mother, friends,
She has not married me
But she has buried me,
Because she gave me not
Unto my heart's desire,
The valiant youth.
But unto one, my friends,
An old wretch, with a beard
Like to a porcupine,
His breath like rotten hay.
When in his arms I lie
'Tis as a heap of stones.
When to some house we go
He walks behind,

Lame and grimacing.
Ah! the valiant youth,
His beard is soft as wool,
Sweet basil is his breath,
When in his arms I lie
'Tis as a feather-bed,
When to our friends we go
He walks in front of me,
Proud as a partridge.

17

THE SAMOVILA'S CASTLE

Long ago the Samovila[a]
Set about to build her castle,
Not in heaven nor on earth,
Nor upon the hanging clouds.
The foundation-stones were laid;
Only of new-married men
And she took to serve as mortar
Maidens with a face of whiteness,
And to join the upper stones
Took she brides with darkling eyes,
For the roof she seized upon
Nothing else but cradle-children;
For the pillars[b] at the gate
Snowy-bearded burgesses,

For the arch above the gate
White-capped lady burgesses.
Yet the Samovila wanted
Something to perfect the castle,
Yet she wanted seven children
For the roof to be completed.
Therefore did she send a message
To the district of Praskovo,[c]
To Praskovo's honoured worthies,
Saying: Worthies, give to me
The crowded Danube villages,
That I may possess the children
And complete my castle roof.
Then the councillors assembled
And they talked to one another,
And they would not give to her
The crowded Danube villages,
But they strongly recommended
Several forests to her notice,
Asking her to take a storm
And uproot some firs and oaks
To complete the castle's roof.
Then the Samovila cursed them,
And she rushed into the forest
And from there she hurled a storm
And a plague it was she hurled
On the crowded villages,
So that she became possessed
Of whate'er she had demanded,
And the castle was completed.

18

If it's flowers that you want,
Then, O youth, come in the morning,
'Tis the time when happy flowers
Will reciprocate your love.

If it's water that you want,
Then, I pray you, come at noon,
'Tis the time when laughing water
Will reciprocate your love.

If it's love that you desire,
Then, O youth, come in the twilight,
And perchance a lovely maiden
Will reciprocate your love.

19

Eat and drink, O my companions,
At the board one must be joyful.
We must wish each other well
In this evil foreign land.

A foreign land is always evil,
As a step-mother, always hard,
And though our native land be stern
She is the mother whom we love.

20

THE DEATH OF MARKO

THERE in the castle, at the lofty battlement,
With his friend of friends sat the King's son Marko,[a]
With his friend of friends, Philip the Hungarian,
And the wife of Marko, the fair young wife attended them,
Filling their cups with the noble wine.
Then it was they gazed o'er the plain of Prilip,
And unto Marko spoke Philip the Hungarian:
Knowest thou what has befallen in the world?
Never dost thou sally forth beyond the threshold,
As if the world had nought save the beauty of thy wife;
And what befalls—of that thou knowest nothing.
There is invented a death-bringing engine,
And inside it there dwells a little ball,
Out it flies and strikes a man—out flies the soul of him.
Then laughed Marko at the words of Philip,
Marko laughed and his wife was smiling,
And these were the words of the old, great-hearted hero:
Widely, forsooth, my friend, hast thou travelled,
Too well thou knowest what happens in the world,
Yet have I fears for thy understanding.
How can a ball kill a gallant hero?
Philip the Hungarian raised his voice and shouted,

Shouted with his voice over Prilip's plain:
Herd, come you hither, leave the sheep grazing.
Young herd, come hither, with your little gun.
Then Marko laughed till the castle quivered:
Now we shall see, we shall be instructed.
When the shepherd came, old Marko seized his gun,
Throwing it about as tho' it were a feather.
And that you say can send a hero into darkness!
Take your foolish gun, there is my hand for you!
Let the ball fly forth and I shall catch it!
But the ball flew forth and bored thro' Marko's hand.
Then he grew pale, the old, great-hearted hero,
Sitting there in silence, his arms upon the table.
At nightfall he went and returned no more.

There is a story told by the people,
That Marko hides between the lofty mountains,
Near to the chasm of Demir-Kapia,[b]
Where the river Vardar turns like a serpent.
There in a cave is he lying hidden,
There does the hero slumber thro' the centuries;
In the soil before it has he plunged his lance
And against the lance that hero-horse is fastened,
Thus to be ready for the gallant Marko
When he rides again in pursuit of exploits.
Now beyond the chasm winds a mountain-footpath,
When the wanderers go there, turning round they shout:

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

Do you live, do you live yet, the people's father,
Marko?
And it is to them as tho' they heard an answer:
He lives, he lives yet, the people's father, Marko.

21

MACEDONIAN BEGGAR SONG

GIVE me something, my sister in God,
Give me something from your heart,
For God has made me blind and lame.
The little piece that you will give me
Has perhaps small worth for you,
For me it is a gift from God.
I had a house once for myself
And a sweet, industrious wife
And children with such sparkling eyes
As yours who play there in the yard.
Perhaps I have gone crooked ways
And therefore came this punishment,
So that the hell-world has become
Nothing but a pit of blackness.
Give mè something, my sister in God,
Give me something from your heart,
For God has made me blind and lame.

The little piece that you have given
May God return a hundred fold,
And happy life to spend it in.
Thank you. Good-bye.

22

I WAS a lonely bachelor [a]
And thus I lived a hundred years,
And at a hundred and ten I married.
My heart desired her young and young she was,
About as young as I.
But there was something strange about her,
Always, always she was ailing,
Soon the head and soon the breast
And soon the spine it was that ailed her,
So that I was quite amazed,
Knowing not what I should do
With my first and only love.
Then I came into the village
And I met two aged women.
You old women, you old women,
There is something I must ask you
Of my first and only love.
I was a lonely bachelor
And thus I lived a hundred years,
And at a hundred and ten I married.
My heart desired her young and young she was,

About as young as I.
But there was something strange about her,
Always, always she was ailing,
Soon the head and soon the breast
And soon the spine it was that ailed her.
Perhaps you know some remedy?
And thus the women answered me:
You aged fool, yourself so ill,
For such a love as you possess
There is an instant remedy,
The spade.

23

Neda, lovely Neda
Lay on the bed of sickness.
When they sowed the fields
Illness came upon her.
When they reaped the fields
Illness had not flown.
Then said she to her mother:
Lift me up in your arms,
Take me into the courtyard
That I may have sight of the sun,
That he may have sight of me.
And as they were on the threshold,
The friends of Neda came past,
They came to work in the fields.
They sang and it was for her:

Rise, Neda, and come with us,
Make an end of your sickness,
Come and finish the work
That you began in the spring.
Neda lifted her eyes,
She moved her lips to reply,
She sank on the ground and was dead.

24

From the wars the warrior went,
From the wars went his companions.
Where are they? 'Tis God who knows.
Under a tree in the distant mountains
He lies wounded unto death,
And on a branch the falcon[a] sways.
"Why linger you so patiently?
Why linger you?" the warrior says,
"For none will take this breast from you,
And none but you will peck these eyes.
So then, I beg you, hero-bird,
Seize you my hand when I am dead,
My hand which holds the wedding-ring
And to my native village fly.
There will you know my mother's house
Because an oak stands at the gate.
There, falcon, throw your burden down
So that my lot be known to them."

Whereon the falcon, hero-bird:
"Yesternight I saw your village,
For the Turks were lately there
And have bravely dealt with it.
All was given to the flames,
It is made a place of ruins.
Past your mother's house I flew,
In the oak I saw three cuckoos,
From time to time the first one sang,
When she ceased the second sang,
While the third sang ceaselessly."
"It is done," the warrior said,
"Thither need you fly no more,
For the first one is my bride
And the second is my sister
And the third one is my mother
Who will never cease from weeping."

25

It happened in a garden that a yellow quince exclaimed:
Nothing in the world, I trow, can compare with me in beauty.
But the boast was overheard by a neighbouring apple-tree:
Why should you be proud, he cried, in that woollen overcoat?

Have you looked upon my branches, have you seen
their clustering fruit
Which give pleasure unto men while they drink
their cups of raki?
This the rose-tree overheard and immediately pro-
tested:
Wherefore, apple, plume yourself, apple whom the
worms are eating?
Have you looked upon the roses which I give to
every summer?
All the youths and all the maidens, all the newly-
married women
Love to wear these buds of mine for a charmful
ornament.
But all this the vine has heard, vine with the dis-
torted foot:
Why should you be proud, says he, you who will so
soon be faded?
Have you seen the load of grapes which I carry for
the world?
It is I who have assisted many youths to win a
bride,
I who lead so many maidens laughing from their
father's house,
Hundreds of old men are yearly buried with the
help of me,
With my help are babes in hundreds lifted yearly to
the font.

26

THE wind is blowing over the fields,
But out of my heart it sweeps not the darkness.
I would that a wind should be made of my sighs,
That it would speed over mountain and valley,
And it will surely find my beloved,
It will sing him a desolate song,
It will sing till he thinks of me.

27

NICHOLAS THE TARTAR

SORE, sore afflicted was Nicholas the Tartar,[a]
Nine endless years had he lain in bed,
In among his hair grew the grass already,
While a swarm of flies buzzed within his ears,
And from his body many worms were crawling,
He could not be cured, neither could he die.

Then arose his mother and she addressed him :
Son, O my son, you Nicholas the Tartar,
Terrible in truth are the sins you have committed,
For you cannot die, nor can you be cured.
Thereupon answered Nicholas the Tartar :
Mother, O mother, here I salute you,
I am a sinner, how should I not be ?

'Twas in the days of the first insurrection
That we allied ourselves with the Tartars
And that we came to Sofia, the ancient,
Over the wide plain came we to Sofia
And for the halting-place did we choose a woodland
Where we encountered a multitude of shepherds,
Shepherds we met and a score of goatherds;
Seventy the children whom we laid hold of,
Three were the cages that we discovered,
Into the cages did we drive the seventy.
Then we brought fire up to the cages
And in this way the cages were destroyed,
Also the children were destroyed, the seventy.
As they were burning, they wailed and they clamoured,
They wailed and they clamoured, all of them, the seventy,
So that to the heights of Heaven rang their voices
And all the green wood bowed itself in sorrow,
Mournful were the leaves as they fell upon the ground.
Then did we come to Sofia, the ancient,
And lo! the gates of the town were locked before us,
But Etir Pascha himself did unlock one,
And himself did hold the bridles of our horses,
To the cool chamber did he conduct us.
Then his companions fed with corn their horses,
Yet it was white rice that I demanded
And with the rice did I satisfy my courser.

But when my comrades sat around the table,
One dish of meat was all that I demanded.
Then did they bring a child to me, a boy-child
Whereupon this little boy-child did they slaughter
And very firmly on the spit did they secure him,
Firmly they suspended him above the raging fire,
And from the fire the boy-child spoke in this way,
And from the spit the darling spoke in this way,
Father, turn, O turn the spit, I pray you,
My little, white hands are consumed already,
O make me warm, O make me warm, my father,
One, then another—my ribs are being burnt.

When these words were spoken by Nicholas the Tartar
Forthwith from his body flew away the soul.

28

WHAT dost thou want, little plague,
What dost thou want with me,
Why dost thou bring me these sorrows,
Heaping them ever upon me,
Have I not sufficient of mine
That I should be worried with thine?

Dear Ivan, listen to me,
Listen and do as I say,

First find out a good, strong sack,
Place in it thy sorrows and mine,
Then plough the field of thy father
And sow our sorrows therein.
If they give birth to a rose
We'll ask for the marriage-bell,
But if a nettle comes forth
We must bid each other farewell.

29

She took water from the well
And espied herself therein
And unto herself she said:

Beautiful indeed am I,
And if those two eyes were dark
The King's treasurer [a] would love me.

Pleasant are his occupations:
In the morn he looks at bills
And at noon he goes a-hunting.

After the fox his greyhound goes,
After the partridge goes the falcon,
And himself pursues a maiden.

Soft, warm fur comes from the fox,
From the partridge dainty meat,
From the maiden happiness.

30

O LOVELY maiden, I'll be your slave,
Yes, for three years will I be your slave,
That I may gaze on your slender form,
On the dark eyes and their delicate brows,
The blushing cheeks, the sweet, sweet lips,
The neck so white and the beautiful breast.

What do you want of me, foolish young man,
Young in years and in wisdom too,
Go, go, I pray and annoy me no more,
What good does it do me if you are my slave?
What good does it do you merely to gaze?
Your eyes embrace me, your arms will not.

31

A SONG FOR DANCING

YOUNG woman, young woman,
Your husband is hungry,
Is hungry at home.—
And what do I care!
'Tis the moment for dancing,
For heavenly dancing.
There's bread in the cupboards;
Why does he not eat?

Young woman, young woman,
Your husband is thirsty,
Is thirsty at home.—
And what do I care!
'Tis the moment for dancing,
For heavenly dancing.
The water-jug's full;
He can drink and be drowned.

Young woman, young woman,
Your husband is dying,
Is dying at home.—
And what do I care!
'Tis the moment for dancing,
For heavenly dancing.
A packet of incense
Is there and a candle.

Young woman, young woman,
Your husband is dead,
Is dead in your home.—
And what do I care!
'Tis the moment for dancing,
For heavenly dancing.
His mother can mourn
When they take him away.

32

On the road I laid me down,
On the road I fell asleep
And the road became my bed
And my pillow was a stone.
Thus I slumbered, thus I dreamed
That a maiden stood before me
With a girdle made of crimson
And with flowers strewn about her.
As I rose to gaze upon her,
Woe is me! the maid had vanished...
Ah! no longer can I bear it,
Solitude is all too heavy.
Woe is me! I have been sleeping
With a stone for bed and pillow,
Nothing did the maiden bring me
Save a dream—I am alone.

33

Primroses embrace our knees:
I was sent to gather them
And the primrose thus addressed me:
Youth, I pray you, be my brother,
Give me not to youthful mothers,
For they treat me shamefully,
Placing me within the cradle

Where small fingers pluck all day.
Youth, I pray you, be my brother,
Give me not to other youths,
For they treat me carelessly,
Placing me within their breast
And throwing stones throughout the day
So that on the ground I fall
And they tread me with their feet.
Youth, I pray you, be my brother,
Give me to the modest maidens,
For they treat me rightfully,
Placing me upon their brow
I have pride throughout the day
And when evening cloaks the world
Carefully do they release me
And in water do they place me
That my fragrance may be guarded
And that in the hours of night
I may perfume all their dreams.

34

THE SISTER'S DIRGE

Stoyan, my beloved brother,
Say oh! say that you can hear me,
Rise, my brother, come to me.
Oh! you will not hear my sorrow
Nor that of my daughter Cona.

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

Brother, what has come upon you
To be dressed in such a fashion?
Are you starting on a journey?
Tell me, my beloved brother,
If you will come back to me,
If I still may hope to see you.

Oh! that carriage—I can hear them,
And upon it they will place you.
Silan, my beloved brother,
Listen to me, what I tell you,
Say I send our father greeting,
Say I send our mother greeting,
And my daughter also greets them,
All of them, most heartily.
Tell our good, our best of mothers
That my girl is still unmarried.

Silan, my beloved brother,
Keep all this in your remembrance
And entreat the grace of God
For my daughter, for my Cona.

35

Now the shepherds argued, for they were consulting
Whither, being midday, they should drive their flocks.
Then proposed a young one, he who was a jester:
"Surely we should drive them to the dreary mountains,
Where no stream is flowing, where no grass is green,
There will they be learning what is in our bosoms
When among the mountains we recall the village,
Ah! the distant village where the maidens dance."

36

HEARKEN, Angelina! Samovila's sister,
Go not to the forest in pursuit of herbs,
In pursuit of herbs to despoil the forest,
'Twill not heal your brother, there is none can heal him
For that he is loved by the water-Samovila.
Should you not believe me, climb upon the mountain,
Climb upon the Balkan. When you grasp the summit
Throw from there a look on the plain beneath you
And you will behold a broadly-shading tree.

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

Under it reclines the water-Samovila
While upon her lap lies your brother's head,
And her fingers play in his tangled hair.
When you have beheld, cry not, be not fearful,
Be you merry-hearted, raise a song of gladness,
Sing you in the song: "O sister Samovila,
Give back into freedom the brother whom I love."

Therefore Angelina climbed upon the mountain,
Climbed upon the Balkan. When she grasped the summit
Threw she down a look on the plain beneath her
And she did behold a broadly-shading tree.
Under it reclined the water-Samovila,
While upon her lap lay the brother's head,
And her fingers played with his tangled hair.
But the maiden sang not, was not merry-hearted,
Thinking but to save him, piercingly she cried:
"Evil Samovila! give my brother freedom,
For these cruel nine years have you held him captive."
Then the Samovila looked with blackest anger,
In her arms she lifted him who lay beside her,
In her arms she lifted him into the heavens,
And when he had fallen he lay there in pieces
Whereof the biggest could be carried by an ant.

37

VERY hastily went Guerga
From her threshold to the well,
So that she did lose her girdle,
Yes, her gold and silver girdle;
And as she returned to seek it
She encountered George, her suitor,
And addressed him earnestly:
"O thou young and simple fellow,
Tell me, hast thou found my girdle?"
"God," he answered, "be my witness,
I have not, I have not found it.
If to-day, though, I don't find it,
I consent to take its place
And twine myself about thy waist."

Very hastily went Guerga
From her threshold to the well,
So that she did lose her necklace,
Yes, her beautiful, pearl necklace;
And as she returned to seek it
She encountered George, her suitor,
And addressed him earnestly:
"O thou young and simple fellow,
Tell me, hast thou found my necklace?
"God," he answered, "be my witness,
I have not, I have not found it.
If to-day, though, I don't find it,
I consent to take its place
And twine myself about thy neck."

38

I WENT at twilight, mother, yesterday,
Into the meadow, „ , to the well,
Because of water, „ , for my steed
And there it happened, „ , that I met
The darling maiden, „ , of my dreams.
A stone of marble, „ , was her seat
And she was washing, „ , her white face.
Go quickly, quickly, „ , ask for her,
And if her parents, „ , should refuse,
Then come back quicker, „ , unto me:
My horse is ready, „ , at the door,
Within the stirrup, „ , are my feet,
My thoughts are turning, „ , far away,
Into the country, „ , of the sage
Who—as they tell me— „ , understands
Love and the issues, „ , born of love
For he too wandered, „ , far away,
And he will give me, „ , quietness.

39

NEAR the threshold she stood,
Combing the hair of her daughter,
And as she was plaiting it
She chided her daughter and said:
Yet shall you marry him
Whom I have chosen for you.

But the girl answered not,
Save for the burning tears,
And at the close of day
She fled to the side of the Danube
And cast herself in the river.
Her wreath [a] was carried away
And thus did the maiden exclaim:
Swim, O wreath of mine, swim,
Greet my mother from me,
Tell her she shall not come
Unto the Danube for water,
Since the two springs on the bank
Are my sorrowful eyes,
And if she draws from them
She will be drawing my tears.
Swim, O wreath of mine, swim,
Greet my father from me,
Tell him he shall not dig
In the vines of the Danube
Or he will dig my bones.
Swim, O wreath of mine, swim,
Greet my brothers from me,
Tell them they shall not mow
In the fields of the Danube
Or they will mow my hair.
Swim, O wreath of mine, swim,
Greet my lover from me,
Tell him he shall not mourn
For me, and he shall not wait,
Say that I died for him.

40

Unto the bird spake Dimitar:
O nightingale, grey-coated bird,
Why have you sung so soon to-day,
And have awakened me from sleep,
Me and my faithful following?
And thus the nightingale replied:
Dimitar, bearer of the sword,
O valiant leader Dimitar,
As you demand, so shall I speak,
So shall I speak the truth to you.
Six years have vanished since I came
To dwell in this inviolate wood,
But never have I raised my young.
Sometimes 'twas due to wintry hail,
Sometimes to biting frost and storm
And sometimes to your followers.
But now it is the seventh year
And I have built a seventh nest.
Behold what I have raised therein—
I have not raised a living bird,
Only the song for which he lives.
Dimitar, it will follow you
Wherever you or yours may go,
Upon the peaks, the Balkan peaks,
Thro' our beloved motherland,
The gracious wood, the spacious wood.

41

'Twas daybreak as two nightingales began
To sing and quarrel at the maiden's window:
"Can you decide," said one, "which is most fair,
Is it a pine wood or an ivy wood?"
"Fair is an ivy wood," was the reply,
"But it must wind itself about the pine."
"Then can you tell me—you decide so well—
Which is the loveliest star that looks from heaven,
Is it the morning or the evening star?"
"I think the star of eve," was the reply.
"The star of eve! and how can that be so?
For never can it hope to shine alone
But winds itself in circles round the moon,
As young men round a maid."

42

O Mechmed,[a] my beloved son,
Have you come wounded back to me?
Where is your pipe and your Heiduck garb?
Ask me not, ask me not.
Ask me rather where are my comrades.
With six hundred I went to the mountains,
Six of them lived and brought me here.
Brought me tho' themselves were wounded.
A little time and I must die,—

Call every one of those I love,
For I would take my leave of them.
When all were come young Mechmed said:
Mother, how long will you mourn for me?
—Till I step down to you in darkness
Father, how long will you mourn for me?
—Till the raven's wing is white
And I see grapes on the willow-tree.
Sisters, how long will you mourn for me?
—Till we have babes to sing asleep.
How long will you mourn, my beloved?
—Till I go down among the flowers
And bring a nosegay back for him.

43

All the holy ones were sitting
Round the table in a row
And according to their ages,
And they drank from wooden cups
And they gossiped pleasantly.
Then the oldest of them said,
"Oh! where is Saint Nicholas?"
And another holy one
Said, "Saint Nicholas has gone
To the high mountain Witosha,
Because he heard that Jesus Christ
Was born there a few days ago,

And he went with salutations."
All the holy ones were sitting
Round the table in a row,
Drinking wine and gossiping.

44

LJUBEN takes leave of the forest,
Ljuben the Heiduck is saying:
Beautiful forest, farewell.
You will remember, perchance,
The years that I wandered within you,
How many heroes I lead
Under the crimson flag,
The many mothers I gave
Cause for the weeping of tears,
The many brides I made lonely,
The children, I know not how many,
Who were made orphans by me.
All of them cry and weep
And curse me and curse you as well.
Beautiful, twilit forest,
Beautiful forest, farewell.
It is homewards I go,
My mother has chosen the bride.

The forest had never spoken to man
But now she opened her lips,

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Ljuben, young Heiduck, she said,
All have I pardoned you,
The many heroes you lead
Under the crimson flag,
The many mothers you gave
Cause for the weeping of tears,
The many brides you made lonely,
The children, I know not how many,
Who were made orphans by you,—
Little I care, forsooth.
I was your mother until to-day,
Your bride was the gentle grass
Whose lap was a pillow for you,
The oaks spread a shade over you,
And as you were dreaming the wood-birds sang.
So long as you lived with me
So long were your joys and your sorrows mine.
Now am I desolate,
Now come the years of pain,
When I shall hear all the makers of song
And never a song from you.

This is my last desire:
Love the new bride with your marvellous love
And, Ljuben, remember me.

45

Dark was the mist that fell on earth,
And then the meadow shone with dew,
And o'er the dew a girl was running
And after the girl a youth was running
And after the youth his mother ran,
And loudly to the girl she cries:
"O why dost thou enchant my son?"
"Thou dost mistake," the girl replies,
"Nor I charm him, nor he charms me,
It is my beauty that enchants him,
It is my white face that enchants him
It is my dark eyes that enchant him
My dark eyes and my slender form."

46

If you love me, love me nobly,
If you love me not, then leave me;
Be not always dumb, I pray,
With your head forever hanging
And with eyes that seek the ground.
If you come to me, my friend,
Come gaily-clad and fresh and cheerful,
Come, I pray, with head uplifted,
Come with eyes unfaltering,
Come and tell me of your love,—

Or I will go to a foreign land[a]
To a foreign land within the Balkans;
There I will dig myself a grave,
Upon the stone there will be traced
The name of him who murdered me
And in my heart the dreadful wound
Of longing will not heal again.

47

Pine upon the mountain's brow,
Tell me why you tremble now.
Over you the sunbeams fall
And there is no wind at all.

Ah! young shepherd, quoth the pine,
Over you the sunbeams shine
And you tremble and it's true
That no wind embraces you.

48

The stranger knocked at the door,
Old mother, young bride, said he,
Open and give me rest for the night,
I am a stranger here,

I know not where else I can go.
Alone in your window a light was shining,
Therefore I came to you.

Not long after the door was opened
And the young stranger entered in,
Entered with horses richly laden.
Then the young woman attended him
And her eyes were fastened upon him,
But the mother looked at the horses
And she gazed at the saddle-bags
That were bulging with golden coins,
And when the midnight hour was come
The women went to their work
For he lay in the deepest sleep.
The mother entered his room with an axe
While the young woman kept watch in the yard.
Heavily fell the axe,
The head sprang forward,
The tongue spoke darkly:
Women, what have you done?
In your own hearts have you struck.
And when she in the courtyard heard,
Swiftly she ran to the house,
She seized the left hand and she knew,
She knew that the ring was her husband's ring.
Speechless she snatched the knife from his girdle,
Speechless she thrust it into her heart,
The mother remained to weep for them.

49

O you green and gentle grass,
You have taken all the meadow
Saving one small place alone,
Where the crimson peony
Dwells beside the pallid rose.
Once he turned and spoke to her :
" Little rose, white rose," he said,
" If your fragrance were but mine
I should have my full of beauty
And I should entwine myself
Round a maiden's willow form,
As a silken thread is twined
Deftly round a golden spindle."
Unto him the rose replied:
" Peony, O splendid flower,
If your crimson hue were mine
All the flowers would gaze upon me
And for me their hearts would beat,
Yet should I not care at all
Since I long for you, for you."

50

THE LEGEND OF THE SWEET BASIL

It happened that they loved each other well,
The youth was Ivo and the maiden Boyka,
And Boyka loved him for the sake of love
And Ivo loved her as a suitor loves.
But when the step-mother of Boyka knew,
She went into the market for a poison
And coming home she poisoned both of them
Because they loved each other all too well.

It came to pass that Ivo died at noon
And it was evening when the maiden died,
And they were carried out into the fields
And at the crossways did men bury them,
So that in death they should be separate,
And from the grave of him a vine did grow
And from the grave of her a blushing rose
Because they loved each other all too well.

Then Ivo held a branch towards the maid
And Boyka held a branch towards the youth,
So that again those two were undivided
Because they loved each other all too well.
But when the cursed woman knew of this,
She took a knife, she went across the fields
And hewed the branches of the slender vine
And hewed the branches of the blushing rose.

And going home she made a fire for them,
She burnt the branches into piles of ash,
Those ashes did she scatter to the wind
And straightway out of them sweet basil rose,
Which is the bloom that young men love to wear,
So love to wear it nodding in their hats
And maidens love to hold within their breast,
To win a perfume for their gentle souls.

51

See, the rain is falling, Wulko! our standard-bearer,
Furl the flag, Wulko! or the rain will drench it.

Let the rain drench it, let it be accursed!
We were nine brothers, eight of them have fallen
Under the flag and such is the purpose,
Such the sweet purpose God entertains for me.

Hardly had he spoken than a gun spoke in Buda,
Far flew the ball over the wide plain,
Till it met Wulko, the young standard-bearer,
And as the soul came out there came these words:

Listen, my comrades, dearly-loved comrades,
Here at the crossways would I be buried.

Dig me the grave with your noble swords,
Over my head, O comrades, place a fountain,
Over my feet plant a shady tree,
That an aged wanderer may have rest beneath it,
That he may rest and think awhile of me,
That a young traveller coming to the fountain
May refresh his horse with the sparkling water,
That he too may rest and think awhile of me,
Whispering my name and my sorry fate.

52

He left his flock upon the hills
And he rode towards the village,
And on his path a girl was running
Whom the dances had delayed.
Then the youth cried : Wait for me,
Haste not, we will go together.
If you speak, the girl replies,
My mother is coming and she will hear us,
She will see us in the moonlight.
And he says : What idle words !
The moon is hidden behind the clouds
And your mother will not see us.
The maiden flies, she rushes home,
She seizes the handle of the door
And at that moment the youth is there,
Snatching the flowers from her brow.

Then she creeps across the threshold
And she calls to her companions :
Go, go quickly, hold him fast,
He has stolen my flower-wreath,
Bring him here, do not chastise him—
I shall do so!
With these arms shall he be prisoned,
They shall be the chains of iron.
These eyebrows shall be whips to smite him
And my glances shall be arrows,
With my lips I shall drink his blood.
So the young man shall be taught
What comes of stealing a wreath of flowers.

53

CARAMFILA! bird of morning,
Did you chance to dream of me?
Tell me, why should I dream of you?
Woe is me! what shall I say?
Barely in bed when you stood before me,
And you and I—two partridges
Were flying over distant fields,
Until we came to the yellow corn
And there we stayed, but stayed not still
For we scattered the corn around us
And men came with flashing scythes,
And so it was we were driven away.

Further, further did we fly,
Where the purple grapes were standing
But you and I—we stood not still
Nor behaved beseemingly.
Then the guardian of the grapes
Raised his gun and shot from it,
So that one bullet reached your wing
And one the centre of my heart.
Then I awakened suddenly
And hither have I come to ask
If you perchance did dream of me
As I, O love, did dream of you.

54

THE SAMOVILA AS WIFE

THE youth was wandering in the wood,
Near the dim borders of a lake
And there he saw the Samovilas
Bathing in the moonlit waves,
Dipping, diving, plunging, rushing,
And with their hands they struck the waves.
Then as he crept towards the lake
He seized a robe of the Samovilas
And when this deed was seen by them
They flung themselves towards the shore,
To where the glittering garments lay.

Back to the village raced the youth
And after him came the Samovila,
"Give me back my robe," she cried,
"Free yourself of the foolish thought
That one of us could marry you."
Yet he ran—she ran behind
And the wedding-feast was held
And the days that followed it
Followed in tranquillity.
Still she grieved, the Samovila,
And before her shining eyes
A veil of darkness seemed to hang
And she would beseech of him
To restore the faery robe
So that she might travel thence
To the mother who bewailed her,
But the youth would not consent.
Thus in nine months it came to pass
That the faery bore a son
Who was resplendent as the day,
Sweet as a child of the Samovilas
For on his brow was the morning-star;
And when the relatives assembled
For the due baptismal rites,
She besought him for the robe,
So that in Samovila fashion
She might weave a dance before them,
Before the worthy relatives.
Then at last the youth consented
And he drew the mystic robe

From a secret place of darkness.
So she danced the lovely dances,
Thrice she danced a circle round them,
Then she rushed up thro' the chimney
Which had not been closed against her
And he ran across the threshold,
Calling out: "Sweet Samovila!
Will you leave the new-born child?
Tell me, who shall nourish him?"
"There on the ground," a voice replied,
"Place him beneath the sloping roof.
I shall command a dew to fall
And that is food enough for him,
I shall command a wind to blow
And to set the cradle rocking."
Thereupon the luckless man
Placed the cradle in the courtyard
But she snatched the child away
And her laughing voice was heard:
"You thought to wed a Samovila!
What is free shall not be captured!"

55

Alas! fair Dona lies
On a bed of sickness,
To her mother praying:
Mother, darling mother,

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

I am near to death,
I shall not wear the bridal robes
But the nine stalwart brothers,
Let them dig my grave.
Upon the mountain's brow
Let them build a tomb for me,
That will have four sides,
At every side a window.
My tomb shall rise towards the sun
And I shall see the sun
Whene'er she climbs the heavens
And from another window
When she comes down from them
And I shall see the plain
From another window,
I shall see the plain
With the toiling people
And out of the fourth window
I shall see my comrades
As at eventide
They come towards the fountain
And the song they sing
Will bring back life to me.

56

Go now and tell them,
Tell your companions
That, O Heiduck,
I have cut off your hands.

Cut away, cut away,
For I did curse them,
When, O Buljuk Pascha,
They trembled on the gun.

Go now and tell them,
Tell your companions
That, O Heiduck,
I have pricked out your eyes.

Prick away, prick away,
For I did curse them,
When, O Buljuk Pascha,
They failed along the gun.

Go now and tell them,
Tell your companions
That, O Heiduck,
I have hacked off your head.

Hack away, hack away,
For I did curse it,
When, O Buljuk Pascha,
It compassed not your end.

57

O FAIREST maiden, fairylike young maiden,
Even as a mist upon my heart you lie,
And I—I know not how you sleep alone.
O come and see the young man's lonely slumbers,
The young man is asleep with open arms,
The young man sleeps with widely open arms.

58

WHICH is the earliest flower to waken,
Which blooms the first of the flowers of spring?

It is the primrose that will awaken
When the first sun of the spring is reigning.

For the step-mother angrily
Shakes the primrose out of her sleep.

Get up early, she cries, my daughter,
Get up early and open your buds,

Or there are flowers that will be before you,
Be before you and open their buds,

And when the shepherds are driving their flocks,
Those are the flowers which they will gather

And at evening the village maidens
Will cherish the flowers that bloom before you.

59

THE CONFESSION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

THE Mother of God went to confession,
Upon her arm she carried the Child,
And as she came thro' the dark forest
All who were there bowed themselves humbly,
All except three contumelious trees,
So that she cursed them and went on her way.
Inside the church she noticed St. Nicholas
Reading the holy book out of the pulpit,
And as he was reading he wept bitter tears.
My brother, said she, my brother, St. Nicholas,
Why do you weep as you read from the book?
Now, put it away from you since I am come
That you may give me the wine and the bread.
My sister, said he, you Mother of God,
First it is right that you make your confession
And then I shall give you the wine and the bread.
Perhaps there is something wherein you have sinned,
Perhaps there is something for which I must weep.
My brother, she answered, holy Saint Nicholas,
It is the truth that I lately have sinned:
As I was coming thro' the dark forest,
All bowed before me, the Mother of God,
And they stood up and for me they made way,
Saving those three contumelious trees

Who would not bow to me, so that I cursed them :
The poplar shall grow and never have shade,
The fir tree shall never have blossom or fruit,
The tortuous ivy, thro' summer and winter,
Shall always be green and his fruit shall be sour.
Thus having confessed, the wine and the bread
Were given, with an absolution, to her,
But the three trees which acted so rudely
Have never as yet been absolved from the curse.

60

ATMADJA said unto Strajil :
O Strajil, dread robber-chief,
Why does your head hang sadly,
Why are you dark-eyed and wan ?
Is the gun grown too heavy,
Or are you tired of the mountain-paths ?
Can age have fallen upon you
Or the young wife—are you dreaming of her ?
And Strajil replied to his comrade :
No, it is none of these things,
And age has not knocked at the door of my life.
As young am I and as strong
As on the day that we fled
Over the paths of the mountain,
But yesterday, O my comrade,
I saw the night coming towards me,

Down there at the edge of the wood,
On the little field where the heiducks rest,
Where is the murmurous heiducks' well.
There I was captured by sleep,
Using my gun for a pillow,
And fearful the dream that I dreamed—
A dark cat came creeping upon me,
Creeping, creeping upon me,
And she fastened her nails
Deep in the flesh of my heart,
And the heart where no fear had been
Trembled and shrank in pain,
And the dark blood sprang forth.
Then it was that I woke,
And this is the cause of my sadness.
Then spoke the heiduck, Atmadja:
Strajil, my comrade, said he,
Bad dreams are good friends of the heiducks;
I will interpret your dream:
There is a black swarm of police
That follows and will waylay you.
Listen to what I say,
Cast from you the heiduck's dress
And take the dress of a beggar,
The fur of a bear on your head,
A beggar's sack on your shoulder.
Then go to the edge of the wood,
And stand there under the shade of a beech.
When the black swarm comes near,
Hold out your ladle of wood.

Each man will give you a copper coin,
While the man walking behind
Will give you silver, for he is the chief,
And he will ask: Where is Strajil, the heiduck ?
Have you encountered him ?
How can the man be known ?
Your sword is under the beggar's dress—
Comrade, you know what to do.
Atmadja spoke and Strajil did,
And at the edge of the wood
It came to pass as Atmadja said,
And when he at the tail of the band
Had given the silver coin,
Then did Strajil spring up
And he gave work to his sword.
Thrice he mowed hither and thither,
Until the leader alone remained
And thus did he speak to Strajil:
Dread heiduck whom we pursued,
That it would happen thus
I have beheld in a dream.
Yesterday when an order came
That I should go in your track,
A sleep fell over me and I dreamed—
A dark cat came creeping upon me,
Creeping, creeping upon me.
And she fastened her nails
Deep in the flesh of my heart,
And the heart where no fear had been
Trembled and shrank in pain,

And the dark blood sprang forth.
Thereupon Strajil said:
My dream! my interpretation!
Fearful indeed was the dream.
Yet has it ended well for me.
So shall it end for you,
Go and tell of this deed of Strajil.

61

WHAT has come to you, my daughter,
That you lie so pale and cold?
I thought to lead you as a bride,
I thought of the star of happiness,
But an unhappy star is lighted.
Was I not dear to you?
Did I not cherish you?
Listen once more to me, my daughter!
Open your eyes and see my sorrow,
My pale face, paler than yours thro' sorrow.
Last year your sister died, now you have died—
I am alone.
Take a greeting to God in Heaven,
Tell Him that my life is lonely,
That I would be where my daughters are,
To have them in my care and love.

62

MARGARETA, lovely pearl,
We are laden with possessions,
For you brought good fortune with you
When you came across my threshold.
Ah! but we were poor and now
One only thing, the dearest thing,
A child of your heart and of mine
Is wanting in our chain of love.
But yesterday as I was sleeping
There came down a dream to me.
'Twas a dream of happiness,
God grant that its end be happy.
I shall call artificers
And you shall command of them
—As you deem most beautiful—
A monastery to be reared
In the pine-clad Rilo Mountains.
Gold shall be the walls about it
And the colonnade of silver,
While the yard shall have its pavement
Of a netted sea of piastres.
Ah! now have I made an error,
For 'tis I who will command.
You shall find a master-builder
(Rumour says that such a one
In Constantinople dwells)
To make a chain for holy Petka,

And of stars the chain shall be
And the golden wreath she wears
Shall be the rim of yonder sun
And the moon's evasive shine
Shall be the cross upon her wreath,
Which in front of it shall glitter,
Dusted o'er with diamonds,
So that when the the Czar approaches [a]
It may summon his embrace.

So they undertook the work
And good fortune worked with them,
And when the picture of the dream
Had been wrought, a child was born—
Upon his brow the sun reclined,
Upon his neck the slender moon,
And the link was wrought of God
In their chain of happiness.

63

Now [a] are the furrows ready for sowing,
Yet is it not seed that is sown in them,
For they are bestrewn with bullets and corpses
And they are besprinkled with hero's blood.
Upon the field there lies the young hero,
Out of his breast the dark blood is flowing.
He lies in the field that is ready for sowing,

THE SHADE OF THE BALKANS

With no one to bury him or bewail him:
No mother has he to shed tears over him,
No father has he to put earth over him,
Only the ravens—they float over him.

64

THE WAGER OF THE THREE SISTERS*

THREE rivers, three loving sisters,
Arda, Maritza and Tunja, the youngest,
Rushed together from the mountains,
Ever hurling wave on wave.
So for three nights and three days they journeyed,
Nor did one of them lag behind.
But on the third day they were weary,
Then quoth Maritza, the eldest sister:
"Let us rest for a little while
And for a little let us slumber.
To-morrow she who first awakens
Shall arouse the other sisters,
So that again we may run together
And then we shall see who wins the race."
In this way it came about
That they rested there and slept;
And Tunja, the youngest sister,
Woke before a cock had crowed,
Before the morning-star had shone,

She woke and did not call her sisters,
But alone she went.
Afterwards did Arda waken
And she said to her elder sister:
"Awake, O sister, awake, awake,
For Tunja has gone already,
She has broken the sister-love,
She has spoiled the mother-milk."
Then Maritza answered her:
"It shall be the command of God
That our sister pay for this,
That her road be longer, longer,
That she be chained to a crooked path,
That she tear away with her
What she sees—wood, mountain, village,
That she be followed by tears and curses.
So then, sister mine, be tranquil.
We have time enough to spare,
For if Tunja goes in that way
We shall rest and overtake her,
Yes, outstrip her easily."

It may be that God stood near them,
Overhearing what they said,
For their wishes came to pass:
Long is the road of the youngest sister,
She is chained to the crooked path,
She is followed by tears and curses.

65

THE lark is flying with songs into Heaven,
For night has departed. My lover, make haste!

No lark is singing, save in my bosom,
And I would linger, love, for a while.

I hear the sound of the water-cans knocking,
Those are the maidens. My lover, make haste!

Those are not maidens going for water,
Those are strange noises one hears in the night.

I hear the waggons coming to market,
The sun must have risen. My lover, make haste!

Those are not waggons; it is the Heiduck,
Onward he rushes into the darkness.
When the sun rises, then shall I leave you,
When he leaps forth from the bosom of night.

66

NEAR the woodland, near the greenland
Do the ploughmen toil in rows,
They plough the soil and sow therein,
They sow the corn, God brings it forth,
Thus giving work to every one:
Unto the lass to swing her scythe,

Unto the lad to bind the sheaves,
Unto the father and mother threshing,
Unto their father to make the flour,
And so bread comes to Christian folk
From which their thanks rise up to God.

67

A MAIDEN slept upon the strand,
Under the shade of an olive-tree.
Then a wind came over the waves
And, breaking a twig from the olive-tree,
It smote the maiden on her neck
That of a sudden she was roused
And bitterly did she complain:
Wind, O wind who bring the fogs,
Why have you awakened me?
Would that it were the will of God
That you shall never blow again.
For so sweetly was I dreaming
And in my dream three youths appeared,
The first was throwing me an apple,
The second, in his turn, a ring,
The third bent over me and kissed me.
The first shall be as a rotten apple,
The second shall waste and crawl through the ring,
The third, who kissed me in my dream,
Will never come with a kiss to me.

68

Listen, old mother of Lala,
Look well after your pretty daughter,
For often and often she goes
Past this threshold of ours
And on the pavement her feet resound,
So that our dogs do bark
And there is no peace in the heart of my son.
He is betrothed in another village,
Yet does he long for your daughter.
He goes to the meadows at break of day
And his lips are parted in song,
But from the time of noon
He waits for the sun to fall
So that he may pass the window;
And whether he sees or he sees her not,
Her voice is raised and he stands enchanted,
Pallid, sunken in dream,
And this is the song she sings:

Ah! mother, if maidens knew,
Never would they be wedded,
For as the rose in the garden,
So with her mother the maiden blooms.
And as the crane's bill fades in the field,
So does the bride in the husband's dwelling—
Under the shade of his father and mother
And from his brethren, living beside her,
And most of all from the husband's love.

69

THE PLAGUE AND GOD

THE dreadful Plague came thro' the land
Casting her yoke on the villages,
The villages and all the towns.
It was in truth an iron sway
And as she came across the world,
Searching for a new domain,
Old, worthy God encountered her.
You Plague, black, fearful Plague, said he,
Tell me, what are your intentions ?
I have seen your savage methods;
Let them cease, for otherwise
Mankind will put the blame on me.
But old Plague looked darkly on him
And she went upon her way
While the venerable God
Climbed in sadness back to heaven.
Over the mountain paths she went
To the pleasant town of Kotal
Where the people, young and old,
Danced in shadowed glade and meadow,
For it was the time of Easter.
Then the Plague came down upon them,
Snatching up the fairest women
And the sweetest little children,
So that tears and lamentations
Clouded all the countryside,

For the husbands groaned as oxen
Driven to the place of slaughter,
And the stricken mothers mourned
Like a wood beneath the tempest.
This was heard by God in heaven,
So that deeper and still deeper
He was sunk in contemplation;
And turning from his grief he spoke
To holy Charalambius[a]:
You are the brother of the Plague,
I beg that you go down to her,
For I think that she will listen
To the prayers of one so near her.
I have part in mortal sorrow
When I hear these hopeless voices
Rising to my throne in heaven.
Thereupon the holy one
Descended to his dreadful sister
And he prayed her to be clement,
Adding too that worthy God
Joined with him in his request.
Then the Plague looked sourly on him,
Go, she cried in sudden fury,
Even if you are my brother
You shall not escape my rage.
Nothing do I see but darkness
And when God encountered me
He cast no light upon my soul.

70

In Neda's yard the sun was shining,—
Yet it was not the sun,
It was fair Neda
With her soft, fawn-like eyes,
Her lashes as the petals of the basil,
Her teeth like living pearls,
Her graceful Samovila form
And close to her the girls assembled,
Plucking spring-flowers in the meadow,
Warming themselves in the spring-tide sun;
And Neda spoke to them:
Warm yourselves here in the sun,
So long as she has not gone down,
So long as no wind of the night has blown,
Driving me to another house.

In Neda's garden a willow grew,—
Yet it was no willow-tree,
It was fair Neda
With her white, dimpled arms
And with her sleeves upturned,
Her darkly-folded brow,
Her mournful eyes;
And as the young men of the village came
To break the branches of the willow-tree,
Fair Neda spoke to them:
Break, have delight therein,

But in its fragrance you shall more delight,
So long as it may bloom and all the leaves are green,
So long as I am young and have my loveliness.

71

Mursho, Mursho, swarthy Mursho,
Three long years have passed away
Since you brought the sheep to pasture
And I have received no rent,
I shall try severer measures.

Thus the Youda spoke in anger
To the miserable Mursho,
Wait, have patience, he entreated,
Till I can collect the farthings.
Then I'll pay you for the meadows.

Thereupon replied the Youda,
Mursho, Mursho, swarthy Mursho,
Had I ever taken farthings
All the meadows would be silver
And the sheep would have no pasture.

But the miserable Mursho,
Youda, Youda, mighty Youda,
Wait, have patience, he entreated,
And a pure white lamb I'll give you,
To be freed of all my debts.

Thereupon replied the Youda,
Mursho, Mursho, swarthy Mursho,
Had I ever taken lambs
The meadows would be white as snow
And the sheep would have no pasture.

Can I ever hope to pay you?
Play upon that flute of yours,
So that I can dance the horo.

If perchance you play the longer
All your debts shall be forgiven,
But if I can dance the longer
I shall rob you, swarthy Mursho,
Rob the payment for the meadows.

Then the miserable Mursho
Played and played three days and nights,
Played until his lips were rigid,
Till his hands fell from the flute.

72

Alas! we have wandered thro' valley and forest,
We who were many as leaves in the spring.
Where are the comrades?
They have come upon death in the mountains,
Where the vulture is scratching their eyes

And the wolf is tearing their bodies.
Have the flag furled, O Manush our chief,
Our wives have become the wives of the Turk,
Our darkly-shawled mothers the slaves of the Turk,
Their dungeons have given white beards to our fathers,
Our children are Mussulmans. Autumn is fading.
Have the flag furled, O Manush our chief,
Let us abandon these valleys and woods.

73

Wisha, the Greek girl, the slave of the Sultan,
Sweet as the morning-star, Wisha is calling:
Here is an exploit for him who would have me—
A rope of sand he shall weave and shall twine
Round the big bazaar of Stamboul,
Round the bazaar Usun-tsharshia.
This the Levantine heard and accomplished;
Then she laughed at him, Wisha the slave:
Not so did I tell you, not so did you hear!
Make an arrow, said I, from the plane-tree;
Hurl it into the violet sky,
Into the heart of the morning-star.
Then the Levantine said unto Wisha:
Come to the window, you marvellous slave;
Look how this arrow will rush to the sky

And bring that beautiful star to me.
Thus did the maiden, she came to the window,
He turned with his bow to the morning-star
And struck with his arrow the heart of the slave.

74

Unto the shepherd Shavdar
Spoke his mother and said :
A grievous winter is looming
Have you the food for your flocks ?
I fear lest illness befall.
And Shavdar replied to his mother :
All that I want is prepared—
A hundred waggons with hay
And five hundred loads of oak-leaves
And two hundred sacks of flour.
But when the winter was come,
Illness came over the flocks,
Nor could he guard them from death.
One, then another, they sank,
The mares, the sheep and the shining cows
And he piled them in separate heaps.
Lastly the leader of all, the ram,
He with the golden horns
And the dark, deer-like eyes,
And the white, silken hair.
Him did Shavdar not cast on the heaps

But having raised in his arms
He carried him up to the mountain side,
Where is the well of the Heiducks,
Under the violet shade of an oak.
He bowed over him and he wept,
He kissed him thrice on the hair
And taking his flute he sang,
Gather, young shepherds, he sang,
Gather, young shepherds, around me.
Our lives have come to an end,
We shall begin them anew,
Raise you the flags, Lallo, my comrade.
God has looked darkly upon us
And all which God has denied
That shall we seize from men.

75

THE maiden planted a vine on the shore
And as she was planting it there she sang :
O vine, I know not for whom I plant you,
Who will gather your purple grapes.
I know not whom they will delight,—
Not me, not me for I am lonely.
God is too high, my lover too far—
God will make life in you with his sunbeams,
My lover makes nought in this bosom of mine.

76

THE FATE OF THE BLACK ARAB

THREE were the heralds sent by the Sultan,
To the bazaar of Stamboul he sent them,
There to the people to cry a proclamation :
If some gallant will put an end to Marko,
Richly, I promise, shall he be rewarded—
All the green mountains of the Kamenitza,
Also Serajevo shall be his possession
And I will grant him the fair domain of Marko
And Sharka the wondrous, his gaily-coloured courser
And the dread mace and the sword called Bright Sun
And unto him shall be the wife of Marko,
The fair young wife and the laughing boy-child.

This was undertaken by the black Arab
Who came straightway to the place of merchants
Where he bargained for a monkish habit ;
There too he bought a rosary of amber,
While a gold cross was hung upon his breast.
Thus did he go to the town of Prilip
And very loudly knocked at Marko's dwelling,
" Mother of Marko "—so it was he shouted—
" Mother of Marko ! where is the warrior ? "
Then Marko's mother opened wide the door
And having kissed him on the hand she answered :

"It is a long time since my son departed
To the town Uskub which is spread so widely,
There he builds a cloister to the Saint Demetrius."
So the monk blessed her and went on his journey,
But from afar Marko, having seen him,
Called, "O black Arab, where do you come from?"
"Softly, softly, Marko, formidable fighter,"
Thus he answered, "load not your soul with sin.
I am no Arab, but a monk from Athos,
From the holy mountain, from Hilendar's[a] cloister.
Free your soul from sin and recall the custom
That if one rears a dedicated dwelling
One must gain permission from the holy mountain.
Therefore am I come to bless your undertaking,
Now bend your head." And when Marko bent it
He took the holy book out of his pocket
And on his head placed the pointed cowl.
Then with his left hand did he hold the scriptures
And with his right hand drew a chain of iron,
Out of his garment drew it and wound it
Tightly, staunchly about the hands of Marko
And with one end fastened to the saddle
Over the wide plain did he drag his captive.
But Marko shrieked like a trodden serpent
So that a Heiduck, the burly Novak, heard him
And to his wife he turned and addressed her:
"Quickly, quickly, make ready my charger,
I hear Marko calling for assistance."
Then he sallied forth to the plain of Uskub
And saw that Arab as he dragged Marko.

"Stay there!" he shouted, "O scoundrel black Arab!
Whence have you freedom to traffic in this way?
I am that Novak whom men call the burly,
Mine is the fortress of steep Katchanina.
Know then, black Arab, if I hurl this weapon
It will smite you fiercely on the forehead
And for you the day will be as darkest night."
"Ah well! fat Heiduck," said the other, laughing,
"You would not deserve to govern your dominion
If you could not kill a black man and an Arab."
So thro' the air flew the Heiduck's weapon
And the black Arab caught it with his hand,
Hurled a chain and lo! the Heiduck was imprisoned.
Then the pair cried as birds whose young are taken,
So that he heard them, Gruitza the hero,
In his lofty castle on the river Vardar,
Leaped to his saddle, one bound and was near Uskub.
"Wait! you black horror, wait! wait!" he shouted,
"For as the stream drives the gloomy water
So shall I drive, shall I drive you headlong!"
Then thro' the air flew the hero's weapon
Towards the black Arab, on the knee it smote him,
Forth flew the chain to Gruitza, the hero,
So that he was made with Marko and with Novak
Even as a bride, the groom and her old father;

And o'er the plain did that Arab drag them.
Now this was heard by Sekulo, the youthful,
In Budim's town which he overlorded.
In Turkish warfare had he been a hero
Dear to the heart of the Sultan Murad.
So then he heard them as he sat at supper
And to his wife spoke the goodly words:
"Why keep you silent with the heroes wailing?
Now is the time for my wingèd charger
Since the black Arab does a deed of evil,
It is the Arab who violates my frontier
But we shall know whence he takes the freedom."
Scarce had he spoken than his horse was rushing
To the plain of Uskub, past Marko's castle.
Dumb was the castle for its lord was captive.
Then spoke the horse: "My beloved master,
Ere we started for the splendid contest
Came your mother, on the brow she kissed me
And she besought me to save her only son.
Wherefore close your eyes, hold me by the mane
And in a flash shall we be standing
Where the poor heroes cry their lamentations,
Where the black Arab has them in the chain;
And when you see him aim not at the forehead
But at the centre of his heaving bosom
And for the rest all is known to me."
Then a dark moment and they stood before him.
"Wretch!" cried Sekulo, "if I be small in stature,
Yet at this moment shall we join in combat
And we shall know what sort of mother reared us

And whose the mother to bewail her son."
Then for impatience would his mace have started
And the black Arab would have flung upon him,
But Sekulo cried: "In my life full often
Have they thrown the mace, has it fallen on me,
Whereof the dark spots that I bear are witness
And of the fate that came upon the throwers,
Thereof are witness the blood-marks on my garment."
Then the black Arab hurled the grievous weapon
And to his knees fell Sekulo's charger,
While the loaded mace rushed above his head
Thro' the green grass into the dark earth.
Only the point stretched out like a fir-tree,
Even as a fir-tree shaken by the tempest.
Then it was Sekulo held the mace above him,
Nor did he aim it at his foeman's bosom
But at the forehead of his rearing charger.
So like a storm-wind thro' the air it hurtled
And between his eyes smote the black Arab,
That for him the day became as darkest night.
High reared the horse, violently swerving,
And o'er the plain rushed in confusion,
While by the stirrup it dragged the black Arab
And young Sekulo raced along behind them,
Drawing that sabre which carves a way thro' stone.
Then one stroke, his foeman's head was rolling
And after he had placed it in his saddle-bag
Forthwith he rode to the noble captives;
Then another stroke and their chain was riven

And to the heroes did he say: "Sweet uncles,[b]
Honourable heroes, go ye back, await me.
I go to Stamboul, soon is my business finished."
Then was it evening, at dawn he came to Stamboul
And without waiting, without hesitating
Strode he up to the palace of the Sultan,
Where the Sultan, cross-legged, sat before his breakfast
And the young Sekulo spoke to him in this way:
"Ten thousand marvels! or did you command it,
That the black Arab should have sport in our fields?"
"What black Arab?" blandly asked the Sultan,
"I know of nothing, tell me more precisely."
Then the dripping head he drew from out his saddle-bag
And to the feet of the Sultan hurled it,
So that the table trembled and the breakfast
And a three-years' fever settled on the Sultan
When he saw the white of those gaping eyes
And the lower lip hanging to the chin,
While the lip above rose on to the forehead.
"I know of nothing, splendid little hero,
I know of nothing"—thus spoke the Sultan—
"And I pray you act as you here have acted
Unto such scoundrels who go forth to plunder."
Fair words he gave him, mules he gave him fifteen,
Stores of wondrous treasure, gold and silver coins.
So young Sekulo went the homeward journey
And on his way met the liberated heroes.

Then in a hostel did they come to anchor
There at the crossways on the plain of Uskub:
Three long weeks long was their song resounding,
Laughter and clanging of the copper vessels.

Gone is the time but there lives the story,
Often indeed upon the lips of old men
For the delight of all Christian folk.
So comes the song that you have from me,
So comes the health that you have from God.

77

She came early to the Danube,
Before the moon was blotted out
And she asked him if her lover
Had gone sailing to the sea,
But the moon did not reply.
Then she asked the rolling Danube:
"Have you borne him away from me?"
"Maiden, it was yesterday,
Yesterday," the Danube answered,
"That he sailed beneath the moon
And the moon showed him the way.
I saw him lean against the mast
And speaking thro' the flute he said:
'Raina, maiden, my first-beloved,
The necklace that I meant for you

It is carried by another
And her I carry in my heart.'
Raina, listen," said the Danube,
" If you find the world too lonely,
If you would not live in sorrow,
Come to me and my warm embraces."
But before the words were ended
She was in his cold embraces.

78

[a] Oh! if you knew how my heart is glad,
How I rejoice at the coming of spring:
All the world is in the meadows,
All the world, both man and beast.
Far away one sees the kine
As they make towards the forest,
In the grass the horses loiter,
Here one sees white, shining sheep,
The goats are scattered upon the hills.
All is well and so full of joy:
On that side I see the farmer,
Ploughing into the breast of earth,
Ploughing the breast of the virginal earth.
His two oxen they are angels,
And his driving thong is pine wood
And his yoke is twined with basil,
Which has a fragrance so marvellous

That all creatures are turned towards it
And as they turn they pray to God:
Grant us, dear God, O grant to us,
That this year be the best of all,
Give life and health to every one,
Give to the farmer life and health,
And, O God, beyond all this
Grant thou that his work be fruitful.

79

Once the maiden's mother boasted
To the boys and village maidens
As they stood beside the well:
"I have in my house a daughter
Who is radiant as the sun
And makes warm, too, as the sun."
This was heard by the brazen sun,
Wherefore said the brazen sun:
"Hearken, mother of yon maiden,
Come, I pray you, with your daughter,
Let us undertake a wager
And observe it faithfully.
If she causes me to glow
Hers shall be my winged steed,
But if I can warm the maiden,
I shall hold her in possession."
So the mother took the maiden,
Took her to the brazen sun,

And the maiden and the sun
Put forth flames, their radiant flames,
Their fiery flames at one another.
Thus he beamed unceasingly,
Hurled his beams upon the maiden;
But in spite of all his fervour
She grew not an atom warmer,
Not a blush came to her cheeks,
White she stayed, as whitest linen,
As white linen which is bleached.
But the sun, proud and so brilliant,
Grew himself quite warm and glowed.

80

THE LEGEND OF THE CUCKOO*

WHAT is that on lofty Belastitcha
Which is shining there beneath the sun?
Is it the snow that winter left behind
Or perchance a swarm of silvery swans?
No, it is not the snow that winter left
And it is not a swarm of silvery swans.
It is a tent
And in it young Stojan is lying ill.
Once did he say unto his sister Yana:
Go down, I pray you, to the gracious Danube
And bring me water, for my lips are dry.

Then she replied unto her brother Stojan :
O brother, since I do not know the way,
If I set forth I never shall return.
O sister, did he say, O darling sister,
Take from your finger little drops of blood,
So that when you are going thro' the forest,
You leave a sign upon the trees and stones
And when you come again, can find the way.
This did the pale Yana do,
Made a sign upon the trees,
From the Danube drew the water
And was coming back again.
O you pitable maiden !
Meanwhile had a rain descended
And had captured all the signs,
So that Yana looked in vain.
Three days and three nights she wandered
But the path she could not find
And mournfully she prayed to God :
Beloved God, beloved God,
Change me to a little bird
That will soar above the beeches,
Looking where my brother lies.
So God, having heard the prayer,
Changed her to a bird of grey,
To a cuckoo did he change her
And she soared above the beeches,
Calling for the stricken brother.
But alas ! she could not find him
And she looks until this day.

81

Two women happened to dispute,
The young wife and her sister-in-law,
Which of them was the loveliest,
And as themselves could not decide
They started out to seek the judge
And on their way they met a youth:
"Young wife," quoth he, "and sister-in-law,
Tell me whither you may be bound."
"Ask not," they said, "but let us go,
For we have quarrelled and seek the judge,
To learn who is the loveliest."
"Bah!" cried he, "that is not worth while
Any one, even I, can settle such things:
The young wife is an autumn frost
That spoils whate'er it lies upon,
The maiden is the dew of spring
That fills the world with loveliness."

82

"He came back from a foreign land
He came back and the night had fallen
As he knocked upon the door.

Arise, my wife, who so long hast waited,
After nine years have I come again.

Many, many have knocked on the door,
Give a sign, for I know you not.

Here is standing the cherry-tree
Under which we were wont to linger.

Every man in the village knows
Of the cherry-tree. Give another sign.

Thou hast three children, the first Petkana,
The second Ivana, the last Ivan.

Every man in the village knows
Them and their names. Give another sign.

On thy left shoulder is the mark
My teeth made in that sacred night.

83

Host and hostess, we salute you!

Czar Stephen sat him down to supper
And what is it he was eating?
Dainty game, imperial fish,
Grapes, the sweetest, from the south,
Wine, the strongest, from Stamboul,
And holy Petka and Nedela[a]
Waited on him, filled the glasses.

And the Czar spoke unto them :
Have my greeting, you attendants,
Will you name me such a hero
Who could sing the song of Czars ?

And the first of his attendants,
Holy Petka, thus began,
She began the Song of Czars :
In the realms of Paradise
Grows a tree most marvellous,
Staunch the trunk and broad the branches,
All the tree is made of gold.

Czar Stephen made her this reply :
Have my thanks for that, O maiden !
It is not the song of Czars.
Who will name me such a hero
Who sallies forth and of himself
Traverses three lofty plains
And three lonely mountain-summits
To collect the wandering waters,
All the waters, all the springs,
So to lead them to the valley
On the high road to Stamboul.
There to place a marble fountain
And to plant a wonder-tree
Green wonder-tree, the maple tree,
That the man who travels there
May have slumber in the shade,
May have water from the fountain.

And then let these words be spoken :
God protect him, God preserve him,
God preserve the soul of him
Who placed here the marble fountain
And who planted here the tree,
Maple tree, green wonder-tree!

Host and hostess, we salute you!

84

I THINK if you loved me as well as you say
You would not wait till the moonlight streams,
Flooding the world with its silver beams.

The moon is for those who would lose their way,
But for the hearts that leap in delight,
O love, my love—the darkness of night!

85

THE RIDE OF PETKANA[a]

AMONG nine brothers she lived
With the beautiful name Petkana,
And over the countryside
Was she the queen of beauty
And the young men with desires
All had desire for Petkana.

From far did the suitors come,
From far, from over the Balkans,
Over nine woods and three rivers,
From the fruitful land Sagora,
And wonderful gifts they brought
For Petkana and for her mother,
And for her brothers, the nine.
Still they would not agree
That she be taken in marriage,
But Lazarus who was the youngest—
'Twas he spoke well of the suitors,
Urging that she be given.
You think it is far, said he,
Yet are we not nine brothers?
If each of us is her guest
We make nine visits a year;
And the suitor is rich in possessions,
Where shall we find his like?
Then did they all consent,—
That week was held the betrothal
And in the next the wedding.
But as the bride went forth
Into the distant land,
The Plague came into her mother's house
And carried the brothers away,
Leaving the mother to mourn for them.
Thus at the break of day
And in the twilit hours
Did she kneel at their graves;
But for the youngest son,

For him did she shed no tears,
For him did she light no candles,
And as she came to the spot she cursed him:
God grant, my son, that within the grave
Your body be so preserved
That you see not the face of God,
For you persuaded me
To give her into a foreign land.
Now am I alone, as a cuckoo.
But Lazarus could not listen
In silence to her upbraiding,
And unto God he prayed:
Out of the cross which is on my grave
Make a wooden bottle for wine,
Make of my death-bed a speedy horse.
I would go to my sister's village
And I would bring her back with me.
Thus did he pray and thus God granted,
And when he knocked at the sister's house,
Open, open, he cried, my sister,
Come to another wedding-feast,
I have brought you an invitation.
Take this wine-bottle in your hand,
Sister, come from the house.
She took the bottle and kissed his hand.
Your hand is smelling of earth, she said.
And thus the brother replied:
Nine new houses have we been building
And it was I who threw out the earth,
There was none other to throw the earth.

Then on two horses they rode along,
For three days and three nights they rode
Till they looked down on their village
And saw the bare fields of the neighbours.
Then Petkana was sore afraid,
The days of the harvest have gone, she said,
Why is the wheat of our fields uncut
And swaying to and fro in the wind?
Eight brothers, he answered, went in the spring
To look for work in another land.
'Twas I who remained alone
And how should I toil in the fields alone?
But who built the houses? she asked,
And how are the houses built?
That you will know, said he,
When we have come to the village.
And then in silence they travelled
And soon they came to the village,
Into the centre of it, the graveyard,
And as she stared at the new-dug graves,
Then the door of the church fell open
And a withered, old, black-robed woman
Came from the darkness and stood before them
And she knew her son and her daughter.
Then as Petkana was turned to him,
Full of amazement, to question him,
Seeing that she had known her mother,—
Then did he float away,
Changed to a thin, white mist.
The mother and daughter fell dead to the ground.

86

THERE sits the shepherd, high up in the mountains,
Thinking of the dead years he takes the honeyed flute,
The flute more sweet than honey and thus the shepherd sighs:
O you heavy years that were allotted me,
If you were so for all men, I can be content,'
If you smiled on others may you be accursed.
I have loved a maiden and perchance she loved me,
Then came another, I was the wedding-witness.
As I held the wreaths, the bridal wreaths above them
The maidens, her companions, they mocked me and they whispered:
Do the business properly, O you wedding-witness,
Never should you moan, you should not weep so bitterly.
Thus did I answer—what else should I have answered them ?—
I do not moan ; it is the heart within me,
My bosom is a well of tears.

87

ALAS for the wretched Stoyan!
On two roads did they wait for him,
On the third did they capture him
And they fastened his white hands

With his own black sandal-cords.
In this manner was he brought
To the house of Jovan the priest
And the priest had got two daughters,
The third was Gioula his daughter-in-law.
Gioula was making butter,
The daughters were sweeping the court
And Gioula spoke unto Stoyan,
Stoyan, young heiduck, she said,
To-morrow, alas! they will hang you
In front of the palace windows,
The Queen herself will be there,
She and the royal children.
Thereupon Stoyan replied:
Go to the younger daughter,
Tell her to wash my shirt
And unfasten my hair,
For it is pleasing to me
That when a hero is hanged
His shirt should flash white in the sun
And his hair float in the wind.

88

On the mountain stands an oak-tree,
Widely does he spread his branches
While the twigs are striving upward
And the roots hold fast on earth.

Now, this oak-tree is the father,
The branches are his daughters-in law
And the clinging roots his sons
And the green twigs striving upward
Are his beloved grand-children.

89

THE LAST JOURNEY OF ST. PETER'S MOTHER

Someone knocked soon after daybreak
At the doors of Paradise
And from behind Saint Peter asked:
Who is it knocking here so early?
I, she answered, I your mother.
Go, said he, you sinful woman,
For such as you this door is closed
And open are the doors of Hell,
Because when you were still on earth
And very rich—do you remember?—
Two beggars came and sang all day
And at last as they were going
You so generously gave them
Each a little piece of bread,
Baked about three weeks before
And for such a grievous sin
Barred are the doors of Paradise.

Is that all? the mother asked.
Wait a moment, he replied.
It occurred not once alone
That for godmother you stood
And you gave the children nothing,
Not a stocking, not a shirt,
So that they are standing now
Shivering in front of God,
Quite barefooted and quite naked,
And they speak not well of you.
Is that all? the mother asked.
Remember that you are my son.
And when she had spoken thus
A softness came on Peter's heart,
He opened and they sallied forth
To stride along the road to God.
But as they came across a bridge
And she, his mother, stood thereon
It happened that the bridge did break
And she descended into Hell.
So then Saint Peter went alone
And having come to God he prayed
That pardon might be granted her
And entrance into Paradise.
Then venerable God replied:
Take thou the rope that once she gave
Unto the gypsy standing there
And let it bring her up from Hell.
Saint Peter therefore threw the rope
And when his mother grappled it

A mob of other sinners came
And hung upon her dress's rim.
Be off, she cried, you sinful crew,
How dare you think of Paradise?
I nurtured him, the holy Saint,
And this he does for me alone.
But as these words came up to God,
The rope went suddenly apart
And she descended whence she came.

It was the rope that once she gave
Unto the gypsy at her door:
It was a rotten, worthless rope.

90

Once a youthful bridegroom died
And for nine long, dreary years
Did they weep and mourn for him.
But he was restless in the grave,
So then while the sister dreamed
He drew near and spoke to her:
O my sister, fair Raduna,
Make no more this lamentation.
I beseech you tell our mother
To put off her black apparel,
Let my father shave his beard
And yourself return to gladness,

Have your locks no more disordered.
I am restless in the grave
And at evening when I go
Towards the stream with my companions
They can stoop to quench their thirst
And I stand there all alone.
For when I essay to drink
The stream is turned to bitterness
Thro' the tears you shed for me.

91

"LOVELY maid of my delight,
Can we ever be divided?
You have fallen across my heart
As evening mist on the lonely plain,
You are to me as the morning star."

"But a young breeze of the night will come
And the mist will be slain, my friend,
Then will the sun climb into the sky,
Sweeping away the morning star,
And rolling, rolling endlessly."

92

NINE girls bore the youthful Momiritza
And a tenth fruit lay beneath her heart.
Then as they sat at their evening meal
These were the dark words spoken of her husband:
Hearken to me, my young wife, he said,
If again you bear me a daughter
Then the dismal dungeon of itself will open
And in the dark shall you have your dwelling.
Never again will you see the sun
Seeing that I ever must be son-less.
And as the time of her trial came
Into the forest went young Momiritza
And at her side walked her eldest child.
There in the shade of a peeling plane-tree
Bore she her son, on his brow the starlight;
In a robe of silk did his mother swathe him
And a satin cloth over him she spread.
But the new-born boy wept such bitter tears
So that the leaves of the plane-tree fell.
Now as it happened 'twas the time of autumn
And the trees were kissed by an autumn frost
And a frost seized the mother and her child
Captured them in sleep, but the daughter slumbered
And she saw the Fates weaving magic circles,
Flying to and fro o'er the new-born child.—
Cried the first of them: Come now, let us seize it!
Cried the second: No! let us rather wait,
Let us rather wait till the seventh year,

Till the mother's heart have pleasure in his play.
But the crafty one: A mother's heart rejoices
Then indeed, my friends, beyond all other days
When she beholds her son under the bridal wreath.
Thus the darkling words and then they rushed away.

So the boy-child waxed and most the father joyed
To see the starlit brow, that wonder to the world.
And when the time was come for the wedding-feast
And the gay procession tripped across the yard,
All the village folk were startled in amaze
For he was like the sun, she like the radiant moon.
Then the daughter spoke: Mother, do you recall
The time that he was born, there in the woodland place?
For you did sleep and I but slumbered and I saw
How three Beings came, wove their magic circles,
Flying to and fro o'er the new-born child.—
Cried the first of them: Come now, let us seize it!
Cried the second: No! let us rather wait.
Let us rather wait till the seventh year,
Till the mother's heart have pleasure in his play.
But the crafty one: A mother's heart rejoices
Then indeed, my friends, beyond all other days
When she beholds her son under the bridal wreath.
Thus the darkling words and then they rushed away.
Now grant me to wear his ceremonial garb
And by the side of the maiden stand.

Thus to the mother, the father tho' determined
And to the church came the bridal train.
But as the priest began the sky grew black,
Suddenly a wind burst loose and viewless hands
Bore away the bridegroom—the bridegroom, no! the sister.

The wedding-feast was held, the pair are living yet;
Thus any one can go and hear the tale from them
And that it really happened this my song is witness,
Seeing that otherwise it would not have been written.

93

THE wood did neither weave nor spin
For through the winter she was ill,
But when it was Saint George's Day,
The joyous festival of spring,
She was arrayed in finished robes,
In finished robes of emerald.

94

YESTERDAY did I come to Shumen
And through the twilight in front of the town
Wandered a maiden bearing a basket,
Bearing a basket laden with apples.

When I had courteously asked for an apple,
She gave me not even a friendly look.
And when I had stolen a kiss from her
She gave the whole basket of apples to me.

95

HATRED and fear sat in her breast
Because her son's young wife Petkana
Was dearer than herself to him,
And one day walking in the fields
She came upon three gypsy-women:
You gypsies, dark-souled wanderers!
For ever faring thro' the world,
To whom all mysteries are known,
Have you perchance some thing of magic
That will turn my son towards me?
Then demand and I shall give you.
Aged woman, they replied,
Fill our hands with golden pieces
And we shall reveal the magic.

On the first day of the spring
Seek you in the wood's recesses
For the first of all the serpents
Which shall crawl into the daylight.
Place it in an unused vessel
And transfix its side with thorns.
Put in herbs that have remained
Green throughout the months of winter,
Boil with water drawn 'ere sunrise,
And when young Petkana sleeps
In the first, deep sleep of night,
Pour what you have brewed upon her,
And away your son will chase her,
For her shape will be repulsive.
Thus they told her, thus she did,
And that evening as Petkana
Went for water to the well,
She too came upon the gypsies
Who besought what she would give them,
And she gave them what she had,
Gave with such a face of sweetness
That they whispered to each other,
These three dark-souled wanderers:
See how sweet and fair she is,
Can she be destined for the brew?
No! let us speak! she pitied us.
Let us not do this wrong to her!—
Listen, fair young woman, listen,
In one corner of the bed
Have you lain for seven years.

We who tell you wish you well,
To-night sleep in your husband's place.
And when the wicked woman came
To the dark deed in the darkness,
It was on her son she wrought it,
And at dawn when he awoke
He beheld himself transfigured—
Half a man and half a serpent,
With a long, thick, scaly tail.
Then he turned him to Petkana:
May my mother be accursed,
Who would do this thing to you
And has brought it over me.
Beloved! harness now the cart
With our team of coal-black oxen;
Take me then into the mountains,
Where the moss-clad mountain peaks
Rise against the morning sun,
Where the bodeful dragons dwell
And on the name-days of our child
Harness both the coal-black oxen,
And approach with them the mountains
Till upon the distant peaks
You perceive the saffron sun,
For then I go to warm myself.
Beloved! take a white apparel,
That I see you from afar,
For if you may not come to me
I may look on you from far,
You and my orphaned child.

96

WELL-BELOVED! well-beloved!
All the spring and the summer mine,
And then you lay in another's arms.
Through the summer I shaded you,
And with sweet water did I regale you,
And with fair apples I nourished you.
When I saw that you rode with him
It was a dagger in my heart,
The dagger which I may not plunge
For I must earn a mother's bread.

97

THE FALL OF STALAK[a]

THIS was the writing of Suleiman the Sultan
To the Knight of Stalak, Theodore the warrior:
Greeting I give you, gay and gallant hero,—
Send of your possessions the four that most you value,
Send as the first one the fair, young Wiisava
And as the second your noble winged charger,
Send as the third your marvellous apparel
Which not a sabre, not a bullet traverses,
Send the mace-like sword, Theodore my vassal,
Send the sword to which a stone is soft as wood.

Thus wrote the Sultan, thus the Knight answered:
Venerable monarch! have my knightly greeting.
But for my possessions whereof you are covetous—
Firm stands my castle on the land of God.
Send a host against it, vast as your cupidity.
That if you can triumph all may be your spoil.
Nothing from a hero can one seize for nothing.
Before this letter came the Sultan sent an army
To the proud castle 'twixt Sava and Morava,
Where it was standing, firm on the firm land.
Then for three years strove the Turkish army
And at their head was Suleiman the Sultan.
But the Knight shouted from the lofty battlement;
Hear now my words, O you Pagan Sultan!
Enough have we struggled, enough of gun and mace.
The walls of my castle have eighteen feet of thickness,
Eighteen feet of thickness and they are of marble.
Come then, I pray you, to the field of combat
So that as champions we may determine.—
In my hand my sabre, at my side is God.
Soon shall we know whose the cause triumphant!
It was in silence that the Turks heard him
And from his battlement went the Knight of Stalak.

Now this happened on an Eve of Easter
When the festivities call wine to the table.
So from the cellar did the Knight command it
And as his young wife was going down she spoke:
Look how the river drags her waves darkly,

Whereof the reason is that on the mountains
And on the plains the clouded snow is melting.[b]
So went she down, garbed as an attendant,
And as the door of the cellar stood ajar
Dumbly she marvelled at the sight before her.
Full was the cellar with the Turkish soldiers
And unfastened stood the wine and brandy casks.
So then the Turks drank the foaming wine,
One from his fez, one from his great boots,
While another stooping drank it from his hands.
But she scarce saw them when she was taken,
When they had grasped her roughly by the skirt
And she cried: Release me, O you Turks, release me.
It is Easter we are celebrating,
And when my master, the Knight of this castle,
Shall be weary with eating and with drinking
I will deliver him to your hands alive.
Unto these prayers did the Turks hearken,
Thinking but little that she might deceive them.
Yet as she went she locked the cellar door
And she ran swiftly up to the castle.
Theodore, she called, Theodore, my first love,
It was not destined we should eat in happiness
And what we thought to drink has become poison,
For a throng of Turks batten in the cellar:
I have beheld them with the foaming wine,
One from his fez, one from his great boots,
While another stooping drank it from his hands.

Then unto God prayed the young hero:
Be thou my help in the sacred season
When the blood within us shouts that Christ has risen
And I have need to cause the blood to flow.
Then he grasped his armour, leaped on the hero-horse,—
Forthwith the gates of the castle rushed open
And o'er the wide plain did the voice resound:
Summon your armies, Sultan of the Pagan,
Summon your armies, be prepared for battle.—
Whom God favours, his shall be the castle.

Then front to front stood the glaring armies
And the Knight of Stalak hurled him to the fray,
Leftways, rightways mowing with his sabre,
Thus thro' their ranks over the whole field
And those who fled not staggered to the dust.
So the gallant hero had them all behind him
And as he turned to ride to the castle
Up to the stirrups was the horse in blood,
As he turned there appeared before him
Such a marvel as the world knew not,
Since for every dead man two men had arisen,
Standing like a wood unvisited by dawn.
Then with fierce ardour did he rush upon them
And as he came to the end of his labour,
Turning, the blood reached to the horse's mane.
Ah! direst marvel! where two men had fallen
Now waited three men and before the squadrons

Mounted on a white horse was the Saint Elias,
Bearing the banner of the Turkish troops,
Green was the banner and thereon a half-moon.
Now came Theodore from his reeking war-horse,
Grant me forgiveness, he cried, O holy father,
Little I knew who was against me.
And the Saint answered: Have my forgiveness,
But until this day has the bold Bulgar
Held his dominion, lived a life of freedom
And from this day shall the Turk prevail,
For against God have you wrought offences.
Dost thou remember, Theodore, young hero,
How you were fighting once at Kossovo
And on your chargers came within the churches,
Trampling on old folk and on little children,
On those children who were not baptized
Wherefore they may not come to God in heaven;
And with your lances you seized the holy bread.
Cease, Bulgaria! now the Turk conquers!

Then the Knight of Stalak turns to his comrades,
Mournful his countenance and he addresses them:
In strength I fail not, nor flags my charger,
But arms and the man—they are not sufficient
If he would sway over a kingdom
And the will of God be not beside him.

Then flew Theodore to the lofty castle,
Seized his sabre out of the scabbard,
Gave one blow and the horse had fallen.

Sleep on the ground there, said the Knight sternly,
Better that your flesh should be torn by dogs
Than have a Turk on the horse of heroes.
Then in twain did he break the sabre,
And as he hurled it loudly did he cry:
Sleep on the ground there, sabre of heroes;
Better by far that the rust devour you
Than a Turk should wield you over my domain.
So leaped Theodore to the castle battlement
And to his young wife thus made he speech:
Verily it shall be as your heart desireth,—
Will you be the handmaid of the Turk, our conqueror?
Will you start with me on the road of God?
Whereon she answered in a voice of valour:
Unto me the Turks are the detestation!
Sally forth, my husband, and I go beside you!
Then in his arms he took the little child,
And embraced his wife and turning round he shouted:
Castle, firm castle, may you be accursed!
In your courtyard shall gypsies shoe their horses!
May you house dead men when Theodore has gone!

Down, down he fell to the distant rivers,
Where the rivers mingle, Sava and Morava.
So with his wife and his child he vanished
And the dark waters laboured above them.

98

DAUGHTER, who is knocking
At the door so late?
It must be some vagabond,
Let him knock,—we shall not open.
Perhaps it is a drunken man
And he knows not where he knocks.
Mother, I shall open.
Daughter, the ruffian will want a bed.
The loveliest is made for him.
Child, my child, he will ask for supper.
Mother, he shall have my kisses.
And he will ask for all manner of things
Which may enter his drunken head.
Mother, do not trouble.
I know who is knocking.
All has been prepared.

99

SHAKE no more, thou wood of emerald,
For I am weighed down with sorrow,
Sing no more, O nightingale,
As thou once wert wont to do.
Leave, O leave your melodies
For they lay such grief upon me.
Many are the times I listened

To the sound of your rejoicing,
And for joy these eyes were dim
As I heard with him beside me.
Now alas! am I forsaken
And your singing brings me pain,
For I must, I must remember
How it sang in other days.

100

HADJI DIMITAR[a]

He lives yet! he lives yet! there on the Balkan—
The blood has run dark from his bosom to die.
Behold the young hero whose bosom was throbbing,
Whose blood ever shouted as dawn in the sky.

There on the ground has he thrown the long rifle,
There too and broken his sabre is hurled,
Over his eyes now the darkness is spreading,
On his lip trembles a curse for the world.

Silent he lies there and in the heavens
Has the sun halted and angrily glows,
Far down in the meadow some worker is singing
And faster and faster that hero-blood flows.

It is the harvest. Sing, you slave-worker,
Sing the sad songs! You are shining, O sun,
Over a slave-land; 'twill die with our hero—
Have done with your tempests, my bosom, have done.

He that has fallen fighting for freedom
Chooses not death—to that hero belong
The tears of the sky and of earth and her children
And of the voice of the maker of song.

An eagle is spreading her wing for a shadow,
A grey wolf is licking the wound and above,
Above them the falcon, that bird of the heroes,
Floats over his brother, for sorrow and love.

Now falls the twilight and the moon clambers
Into that arch where the happy stars dance,
Now the wood rustles, now the wind hisses,
Now chants the Balkan a robber's romance.

And all the white-arrayed elves of the forest
Trumpet their wondering, silvery strain,
Softly they float thro' the shadows above him,
Till they alight as the summer-sweet rain.

One of them brings the keen herbs of the woodland,
Another brings water to quicken his brow,
Another one calls him to life with her kisses,
So that he turns like a wind-embraced bough.

" Tell, me, where is my comrade Karadja ?
Where are the faithful who followed my sword ?
Tell me and I shall sleep sweetly, my sisters,
Where the sweet blood from my body has poured."

They clap with their hands, they embrace one another
And singing they fly on the back of the wind,
Fly to the dim region where ghosts have assembled
But never the ghost of Karadja they find.

Now dawn has leaped to the mountains ; the hero
Lies on the Balkan. Ah ! see, the blood flows,
The grey wolf is licking his wound and the poison,
Scarlet the sun is and angrily glows.

101

In the presence of the Cadi
Were the villagers assembled,
Said they: "Venerable Cadi,
Sit you there with legs contorted,
But give uncontorted judgment.
Thro' the summer have we suffered
And we can endure no longer,—
One mad fellow in the village
Plays and plays upon his flute,[a]
Plays from daybreak until evening,
So that we are sore afflicted.

Maidens and young married women
Leave their work and follow him,
And at evening when we come
From our labour in the fields
We go hungrily to bed,
For that cursed song of his
Lures the soberest of housewives
From the cooking of our suppers,
And the bread [b]—it barely rises."
Then the Cadi sat contorted
And gave uncontorted judgment.
"Bring him in," the Cadi cries,
But he enters not alone,
For the flute is on his girdle
And a ram upon his shoulder,
Ram with wondrous silken hair
Which he lays before the Cadi.
"Well! so let us hear the flute,
That accursed instrument,
Which makes all the people mad,
And old men and women young."
So the youth began to play
And the Cadi stared at him,
Stared and started from his seat,
Sprang upon the floor and lo!
He was dancing, dancing, dancing!
"Play, mad fellow, play," cried he,
"Verily it comes from God
And I—am I here to judge
Almighty God's immortal gift?"

BULGARIAN PROVERBS

BULGARIAN PROVERBS

1. Good or bad, it matters not—they are all Bulgarian.
2. The poor fellow—he knows not the meaning of tears.
3. God is not sinless; He created the world.
4. Only the nightingale can understand the rose.
5. The true hermit retires from himself.
6. Two men are frightened of an unloaded gun.
7. Good is wisdom to possess
   And better still is cleverness.
8. Before God you can say, "I cannot"; but not before men.
9. With silence one irritates the Devil.
10. One is sorry for the girl; she has spoiled the young man's life.
11. The matter drags like a mist without wind.
12. If loaves of bread came down as hail
    The gypsies' hunger would not fail.
13. Water and women go as you direct them.
14. One does not go to Hell to light a cigarette.
15. That house is unhappy wherein the hen crows.
16. Blessing is the father of cursing.
17. To have life one must buy the days.

18. In every village is the grave of Christ.
19. It is bad to live in a room with one window.
20. A cucumber to the Rouman was sent,
    He did not want it because it was bent.
21. Evil is older than the world.
22. He stares like an ox at a painted door.
23. Who lives in sin is buried alive.
24. Strangers forgive, parents forget.
25. Christ thought the children would always be children; therefore He blessed them.
26. If the fox has a tooth left he won't be pious.
27. It is not enough to say Our Father; one must also say Amen.
28. A growth on a man's nose conceals the man behind it.
29. I swim and am thirsty.
30. God lives with Gods,
    Man lives with men.
31. Time is the swiftest horse; woe to him who clings not to the mane.
32. If you would live long open your heart.
33. The most melodious nightingale is the penny in my purse.
34. A lie is a curse of God.
35. A woman desires three husbands at once: one rich, one comely, one fierce—to support her, to love her, to beat her.
36. Youth has no boundaries, age has the grave.
37. On the forehead one sees something more than beauty.

38. A long, dark night—the year.
39. The works of God are not completed.
40. The Earth is man's only friend.
41. The weak man gets strong, the strong man dies.
42. If an ass is angry he runs as fast as a horse.
43. One's own pain is better than another's happiness.
44. Work for the living and please the dead.
45. The smaller saints will be the ruin of God.
46. When the cloth is made the loom
Is put into the darkest room.
47. An idle fellow makes a good prophet.
48. Life would be splendid, were it not for death.
49. May God think of you as your neighbours think.
50. Better that the child should weep
Than the mother of the child.
51. The man who has looked life in the face fears not to die.
52. They can steal my song but not my tears.
53. Two happy days are seldom brothers.
54. The Heiduck's shadow is the scaffold.
55. God's feet are of wool, His hands are of iron.
56. What a wonder!—the wind blows and there is dust.
57. If the meat is sold for nothing
Dogs will eat it all the same.
58. More than one ass has entered Jerusalem.
59. Consider a stranger's head your relatives' feet.

60. God will give but won't carry home for you.
61. Make a bond with Satan too
While the bridge is under you.
62. A crooked chimney but the smoke goes up straight.
63. The clergyman's son is the devil's grandson.
64. The lame man laughs at the legless.
65. Athos is a sacred mountain; that is known to all. But who knows of the sacred field which is the ploughed land?
66. You want wisdom to sit on a throne,
You want wisdom to drive the geese
But a hero to plough the fields.
67. He that is dead once was born
But he that is born, shall he die?
68. One does not get crucified, one crucifies oneself.
69. Work without a man is lightning without rain.
70. The poorest devil is the devil because he has no hope.
71. The Greek will fail because he boasts,
The Bulgar thro' pigheadedness.
72. So long as God lives, so long will men die.
73. Many winds have blown over the world.
74. Keep the cross and keep yourself from those who cross themselves.
75. That from your life the sourness may depart
You must have sweetness come into your heart.
76. It is good to have friends, even in Hell.
77. God can be held by ten fingers.

78. If misfortune has not found you,
Wait a moment, you will find it.

79. Where there is union a bullet can swim.

80. If good friends are together they can eat a fowl on Friday.

81. The fool is hindered by himself and the wise man hinders others.

82. God is too high,
The King is too far.

83. Hedges are not made for swans.

84. A promise is no sparrow, but let it out and you can't take it back.

85. God grant the Greek does not discover
Your money or the Turk your children.

86. Sacred is the earth when it comes over a grave.

87. Our business is like a mule's tail: it grows not and grows no smaller.

88. The man they pity is to be pitied.

89. Neither above nor below the ground
Can Paradise or Hell be found.

90. The six days are good boys; Sunday is a drunkard.

91. Go God's way, remembering Satan.

92. A fool throws a stone into the sea; a hundred wise men cannot pull it out.

93. Faith is no basket to be woven by hands.

94. One guest hates another
And the host hates both of them.

95. He is a great man—God's frenzy is in him.

96. If a man is doomed to live
The medicine will be found always.

97. Two fish were cooking on the fire; one told the other, he wouldn't believe it.

98. You may laugh if you're a slave,
You are dumb within the grave.

99. God does not shave—why should I?

100. And if I should die of sneezing
Why did God send other plagues?

101. Death speaks the truth.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE LEGEND OF LEONORA

It is advisable that we should examine somewhat closely the Legend of Leonora (or, The Sister and her Nine Brothers), since it will in the first place demonstrate the rise and spread of a song in the various parts of the Balkan Peninsula, and in the second place will demolish the pretensions of *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*, for it is not possible that a people, however gifted, should cultivate at the same time two totally distinct species of folk-song. I am sorry to have to break so beautiful a butterfly.

We may learn from the *Sbornik* * that seven Albanian, seventy-two Bulgarian, thirty-eight Greek, eleven Roumanian, and nine Servian versions of this song are known. The subject has been studied with special care by Dr. Ivan Shishmanov, the brilliant but thoroughly scientific folk-lorist, sometime Editor of the *Sbornik* and at present Minister of Public Instruction. In his monograph (*Der Lenorenstoff in der Bulgarischen Volkspoesie*) he comes to the conclusion that, so far as Europe is concerned, the basis

* *Vide* p. 42.

of all these versions is to be found in the Greek and that thence there sprang: 1. Albanian, 2. Bulgarian, and 3. Macedonian-Wallachian. The Bulgarian in its turn became divided into two groups: (*a*) (Servian) —from Greece to the N.E.: Bulgaria north of the Balkans, Thracia and the plain and the S.E. of Macedonia; (*b*) (Roumanian)—from Greece to the N.W.: North of Bulgaria, with the district of Kustendil, and western Bulgaria up to Servia (Pirot). In group (*a*) (as in the Greek) the mother plays the chief part. It is she who through her tears, curses and laments, disturbs the son in his grave and forces him to go in search of the daughter. In group (*b*) it is the sister who has the chief part, the mother being put into the background. This shows that it became a marriage-song. It is an old Bulgarian custom for the young wife to make her home in the house of her husband's parents, and to this custom the Greek song permitted itself to be adapted. This tendency, in the Bulgarian variations, is at times so marked that the mournful ending is omitted since it is not suitable for weddings.

Here then is the best Roumanian version:

The mother had nine sons and the tenth (child) was the beautiful Bojitzat.* There came suitors from a foreign kingdom to where the Djora flows. The mother, like all mothers, did not wish to marry her, neither in the village, nor in the kingdom, nor by the river Djora. Her brother Constantine, he who

* A Bulgarian name derived from *Bog* (God).

wore clothes of silk, said to the mother: "Give, mother, Bojitza. If she is so dear to you we shall be able to ride there swiftly on the black (horse). Give her raiment and be untroubled." The mother listened to him and gave Bojitza into the kingdom of Italy whence a handsome youth had come with shining eyes, the brother of the sun, the friend of the stars, the sweet cousin of the moon, and called the brother of the forest. Not one year had passed when the Plague came to the village. She took away the nine little birds, Bojitza's brothers. She devoured all the nine. Then the mother was stricken and she moaned from her heart; she poured the tears from her eyes and with her tongue she spoke: "Constantine, Constantine, little mother's child! The earth shall not receive you; she shall cast you forth." The earth received him not; the earth cast him forth. He with his mouth spoke: "You, my beautiful coffin, be a horse and you, beautiful cross, be a saddle and you, cloth over my face, be a rein. I shall go to my sister, to my sister Bojitza, to see whether she still lives or not." All these things were ready and he set out on the way. He rode with his face turned to the wind, which came from the end of the world. As he came to the top of the mountain he found there a little shepherd with a black cap of sheepskin, with his sheep behind him. Constantine spoke and asked the shepherd: "You little shepherd, tell me, to whom does this flock of sheep belong?" "Your Bojitza." "You little

hero, you little shepherd, tell me, where is Bojitza, tell me, where is my sister, for I go to see whether she still lives or not." "She is in the kingdom of Italy, whence she will never return. Her mother has married her with pain and lamentation to a young, handsome man with shining eyes, the brother of the sun, the friend of the stars, the sweet cousin of the moon and called the brother of the forest." Hardly were his words at an end when Constantine went on. He went fast, alone, and came to his sister; when he was come there he found his sister just at the head of the dance with the brother of the sun. Constantine kissed her and spoke with his tongue: "Let us go, my sister, my love; take your dress and your mantle and come to our mother, for she wastes away through grief and because many thoughts disturb her and in her sleep many dreams. She thinks much, not little, of you." Bojitza obeyed his words and set out on the way. She went up to a spot which was half the journey, at the well of ravens. Constantine came down from his horse, tied it up and spake with his mouth: "Sister, my little sister, born and grown up in the kingdom near the river Djora. Sit down and kill the vermin which is in my hair, for since you were married no one has removed the vermin from my hair." She spoke to him: "Green leaf,* leaf of the

* The words (*Frunda verde*) are a popular mode of address in Roumanian folk-songs. (For this invocation of flowers *cf.* the Italian troubadours.)

mint, do you hear what the birds sing? '*The living go with the dead.*'" "Go on, go on, sister, my sweet. Take it not to heart, for they are not human and know not what happens in the world." "Brother, my dear brother, why is your hair so foul? Why is your face so faded? Why has your beard fallen off?" "Sister, my love, have no care for that, for since I am on the road too much rain fell upon me and winds blew upon me and the sun burnt me so that my hair has become foul, the face faded and the beard fallen off." From there they went to the magic wood; when they came to the place of sighs, to the hill where the crosses were, Constantine spoke: "My beloved sister, take the silver ring from my little finger. Go to our mother, open the door, for I go to the graveyard to let my horse graze there." Bojitza obeyed his words and went to her mother and spoke: "Dear little mother, open the door, for Bojitza is come." "Go into the fire, you plague, do not mock me, for I gave Bojitza with pain and lamentation far away in the kingdom of Italy, whence she will not come. She is married to a handsome youth, with shining eyes, the brother of the sun, the friend of the stars, the sweet cousin of the moon and called the brother of the forest." "But I, mother, am no plague. I am your child, Bojitza." "Who has led you hither?" "My brother Constantine, arrayed in silk, led me hither." "Alas! your brother has died and his grave is already overgrown with grass. If you do not

believe my words—come, I will show you the grave." They went. . . . She showed it her. On the grave they embraced each other and remained without moving.

* * * * *

It may be mentioned that the Bulgarian version which has been used in this book (No. 85, *The Ride of Petkana*) has not yet been printed in Bulgaria. It was collected about sixty years ago. Only two, or at the most three, of the seventy-two Bulgarian versions were known before the country was liberated, and of these we have taken the finest. There is a ballad by Mr. Slaveikoff (*The Plague-Smitten*) which is founded on our version. (Remark that during the ride it is not the bird who laments the rider's condition, its place being taken by Nature pictures; other vineyards are plucked, theirs are unplucked; other fields are harvested, theirs are swaying in the winds.)

NOTES ON THE POEMS

NOTES ON THE POEMS

No. 1, *note*[a]—The Vardar is a well-known river in Macedonia. It and the Danube occur most commonly in Bulgarian folk-songs. (The epithet 'white' which is applied to the Danube means simply 'beautiful.')

No. 1, *note*[b]—This is the national dance. An unlimited number, even hundreds, can participate. Each performer places his hand either in that of his neighbour or upon the latter's girdle or shoulder. One step is taken sideways to the left and then three to the right. As the dancers begin to move they assume, together, the form of a serpent, which coils and uncoils itself. The leader is usually furnished with a red handkerchief; when he is tired his place is taken by another while he retires to the end of the line. It is not well to witness the horo at a wedding, when only relatives and guests may dance, but at Easter when the whole village may join. The more exclusive horo is apt to be somewhat depressing. It was on a very hot afternoon in the frontier-village of Dubnitza that I was introduced to the mysteries. The perspiring but conscientious bridegroom in a fearfully new suit, the anxious little bride in her tinsel, and some fifteen misguided friends in any costume save the charming one of the country—all these were dancing, as best they could, over the small hills which in Dubnitza are called cobbles.

No. 2, *note*[a]—This personification is typical of Heiduck songs.

No. 3, *note*[a]—It very frequently happens that the opening

line repeats itself in different places and also at the end of the song. (In some cases, though rarely, two or more of the opening lines are repeated.) The initial words of the song under notice show that it is chanted on Christmas Eve by the minstrels who make their way through the village, singing in various houses and being regaled with cakes, wine, and, sometimes, money.

No. 4, *note* [a]—This is the version adopted by Strausz *Bulgarische Volksdichtungen*, 1895).

No. 10, *note* [a]—The Pirim Mountains (in Macedonia) are the haunt not only of robbers, heiducks, and all manner of outlaws and (*cf.* this song) evil-doers, but also of Samovilas, &c. The chain of mountains is called Pirim or Irin-Pirim, whereof the former part recalls the Greek term for the Furies. The name of the most dreadful of all Samovilas is Irina or Irina Samovila.

No. 11, *note* [a]—Of this song there exist about ten Bulgarian variations, among which this is the best. It is held by some that this song is symbolical of the re-birth of Nature, Grozdana being the Spring.

No. 11, *note* [b]—The name Grozdana sounds like the Bulgarian word *grozno* (= ugly), and is given to ward off ill-luck.

No. 11, *note* [c]—Dobrodja was formerly a part of Bulgaria; now (although it lies to the south of the Danube) it is included in Roumania. During the spring many shepherds drive their flocks thither from southern Bulgaria and the mountains, seeing that it constitutes an alluring plain. Some of these shepherds remain for years, others go home annually for a brief visit.

No. 11, *note* [d]—It is customary for a bride to follow her husband to his parents' dwelling, and there for several weeks she is supposed to speak no word, at all events to begin no conversation, since by so doing she pays respect to her husband's relatives.

No. 14, *note* [a]—This is sung when a child's hair is cut for the first time (*i.e.*, in the third year), or when the hair is

plaited for the first time. This latter operation was in bygone centuries inflicted likewise upon boys.

No. 17, *note**—We must distinguish in Bulgarian folk-song between Samivolas, Youdas, Vilas, and Vestichas. The Samovilas are considered the sisters of heroes, whom they are always prepared to help. Some heroes are born of Samovilas; also, though more rarely, some hero-horses are born of Samovila-horses. The common traits of the Samovilas are fair hair and blue eyes. They (like the Vilas) wear white silken robes which are almost diaphanous, and so long that the feet are not visible. A Samovila despoiled of her robe is unable to fly. She is a maiden of ideal beauty who dwells in the forest or in a mountain-lake. There are to be found in many parts of the forests open and approximately circular places. On these the grass is never cut, for the Samovilas are said to dance there. Some three or four of them, in different parts of Bulgaria, are visited at the beginning of spring by persons with nervous complaints, who spend the night there, hoping to be cured.

It is interesting to observe that these mythological beings often appear in the songs as the patrons of Christian usages. Thus we find a Samovila remonstrating with Ivan Popoff for working on Easter Day. In very rare cases a Samovila comes as a messenger from God, but this is a more modern practice.*

* We have in a book (*La Poesia Popular Búlgara*), printed in the Catalan language, a wild and amusing theory for the existence of Samovilas: "diu que Deu va baxar un dia sobre la terra á veure 'l pare Adam y li va preguntar quants fills tenia; ell que ja'n tenia una pila, se'n va dar vergonya y li va occultar en se resposta la meytat de les filles y Deu allavores en castich de sa mentida va convertir la meytat ocultada en Samodives, dantleshi en cambi joventut y bellesa eternas."

The Youdas are evilly disposed towards mankind. A wicked laughter is on their faces. Their hair is so long that in order to comb it they must climb to the summit of a mountain. They probably derive their name from Judas, for in Slavonic countries, as elsewhere, we have a curious confusion of Pagan and Christian superstitions. In this way Veles, the god of cattle, has been converted into St. Basil, while Peroun, the god of thunder, has been confounded with Elias. Owing, however, to the ruthless spread of education the youthful Bulgar is no longer allowed to believe, when it thunders, that Elias is in pursuit of the devil.

The Vilas fly the fastest of all. They bring with them wind and storms. Their hair is almost invariably black and tangled.

The Vestichas are prophets or messengers and agents of bad fortune. They have dry, distorted faces, shining, dark eyes and bony hands. They are always represented as old women.

No. 17, *note* [b]—These are caryatides, and therefore the song appears to be of Greek origin.

No. 17, *note* [c]—Place-names occur very seldom in Bulgarian folk-songs, and still more seldom can one discover the localities to which they refer. Thus there is no Praskovo on the Danube, though elsewhere there probably is one.

No. 20, *note* [a]—The Bulgarian Marko is an adventurous hero to whom Nature has given great physical and intellectual strength, as also frailties of character. He is the national god, created by the people in their own image. His castle, whereof the remains are still visible, was situated near Prilip in Macedonia. His activities are shrouded in mystery, but we have in compensation hundreds and thousands of songs about him, by Bulgars, Serbs, and Albanians. He is accompanied on his exploits by Sharka

or Sharac, his horse, a blue-grey with dark spots. He usually fights against Turks or black Arabs, being the champion of Christian refugees or of the downtrodden. Sometimes, though, he is on the side of the Turks, as, for instance, in 1391, when he strove with them against the Roumanian chief, Mircea. Generally, the songs which celebrate him are marked by anachronisms and geographical errors, since many of them were made after his death and were fitted with the name of the then reigning Sultan or Vizier. Not far from Ochrida is the plain of Gubavitsch where Marko's wine-cellar used to be. Much of the soil there is red owing to the casks having burst.

No. 20, *note* [b]—Demir-Kapia (which is Turkish and signifies Iron Gate) is an abyss on the frontier of Bulgaria and Macedonia.

No. 22, *note* [a]—There exist only five or six Bulgarian folk-songs whereof the *motif* is consciously humorous. The Shopi (natives of the district of Sofia) have a few other exemplars, but the humour of them can, for various reasons, not be reproduced.

No. 24, *note* [a]—It is the falcon, not the eagle, which is considered by the Bulgarian people to be the bird of heroes, always ready to do their bidding.

No. 27, *note* [a]—Many songs are devoted to the sad end of the Heiducks. Some of them are political, others are common freebooters. Of these the former are naturally loved by the people. Nicholas, however, was a mere brigand, frequently allying himself with the foes of his own country.

No. 29, *note* [a]—This is a very ancient song, as is shown by mention of the treasurer, for such officials did not occur in Turkish times; so too the custom of hunting with falcons, as hunting, otherwise than of maidens, was practised by very few Turks.

No. 39, *note* [a]—It is usual, during the week before Easter,

for the maidens to go to the side of some flowing water, with wreaths of willow in their hands or upon their heads. If the willow should happen to sink the maiden will not outlive that year; if, however, it should float and towards the field of a neighbour, she will have been told who is to marry her. It often happens, luckily for the river's reputation, that these simple folk are contented with each other.

When this ceremony had been performed the participants used to adjourn to the house of the prettiest girl. They were regaled with food of a more than commonly sumptuous character, and in some parts of Bulgaria the first morsels of bread were not eaten, but placed under the pillow. It was understood that the youth who figured in the ensuing dream would espouse the maiden. This custom has fallen more and more into decay, and is at present practically confined to very young, unmarriageable girls.

No. 42, *note* [a]—This is a Pomak song. The Pomaks are the descendants of those who in the seventeenth century (perhaps also earlier) were forcibly converted to Islam, and are now the bitterest foes of the Bulgars. The atrocities which in 1876 saturated southern Bulgaria with blood were to a far larger extent the work of the Pomaks than of the Turks. The folk-songs, customs, and language of the Pomaks are Bulgarian. Some have even Bulgarian surnames, and the purest Bulgarian is spoken by them, saving that they count with Turkish numerals. They live for the most part in the Rhodope Mountains (which are chiefly situated in Turkey) and in the district of Lovatz (which is in northern Bulgaria). They are endowed with meagre intelligence, so that the educational endeavours of the Bulgarian Government (which attempted in this way to bring the young Pomaks into line with their contemporaries in the State) had perforce to be abandoned, since none of these reluctant pupils ever left the lowest class. They mostly serve as clerks to the Turkish priests.

NOTES ON THE POEMS

No. 46, *note*.—The 'foreign land' referred to is merely another village than that particular one in the plain which is the home of the singer.

No. 55, *note*.—One of the Turkish customs which still prevails in Bulgaria is for a prosperous person to build a fountain as a memorial of himself. It is erected either in or outside the village, but never away from the road. At Triavna, for instance, in northern Bulgaria, there is a fountain which Nicholas Raikoff, an uncle of Pencho Slaveikoff, built at a cost of 10,000 francs. It lies upon a small hill beyond the village, and thither, until he was ninety-eight, did the old man make his daily pilgrimage. Now he sleeps within sound of it.

No. 62, *note*.—This is a reminiscence of Czar Peter of Bulgaria. He guessed that Ivan, the holy man of the mountain, was his brother who had been lost from infancy. He therefore approached with magnificent presents. Ivan, however, refused to accept them, and, answering from a distant height, he called out that he would not drink save from a wooden cup.

The monastery to which reference is made in this poem lies superbly among the Rilo Mountains. A more ancient building was almost entirely destroyed, and what now forms the monastery is a gorgeous church (adorned upon its outer walls with a series of uncompromising, almost repulsive, frescoes) and a lofty, arcaded building of irregular shape, which encloses it. Owing to the proximity of the frontier there is a constant influx of refugees—homeless, wounded, proudly reticent—whom the monks feed at intervals of twenty-four hours in the great courtyard. It was on the threshold of night when the abbot, distinguished by his wonderful cross of diamonds, came with several of his brethren to receive us at the gate. Under the solemn peals of the bell we made our way towards the church, where with strange rites they welcomed us. The brazen altars

shone through the darkness like a multitude of imprisoned sunbeams. A few minutes later and the monks were ministering to other guests, some seven hundred Macedonians, mostly women and children, who for the four previous days had been flying by rough mountain-paths to this their only home on earth. Various inmates of the Bulgarian Parliament wish to turn the monastery into a shooting-box.

No. 63, *note*[a]—This appears to have been produced in recent times.

No. 64, *note*[a]—This song (from Slieven in southern Bulgaria) stands alone, perhaps, in that we have no variations. The river Tunja rises in the Hemus Mountains, the Maritza in the Rilo Mountains, and the Arda in the Dospat Mountains—they unite near Adrianople and flow into the Ægean Sea. In summer the Tunja is almost dry, at other seasons it rises suddenly and is dangerous.

The *motif* of this song is found in Russia: Volga and Wesusa (*cf. Pictures from Russian Life* by Vladimir Dahl, p. 168, vol. i., 1861).

No. 69, *note*[a]—Charalambius is a Greek saint who presides over plague and other mortal ailments. One of the feast-days in the Bulgarian calendar is dedicated to him, and upon that occasion one attempts to propitiate him, chiefly by means of consuming small circular cakes which are made of bread and honey. These are likewise distributed about the village by the family of a person stricken with illness.

No. 76, *note*[a]—Hilendar is the Bulgarian monastery on Mount Athos. There it was towards the close of the seventeenth century that the monk Paisi wrote his *History of Bulgaria*, which inaugurated the national renaissance. It is written partly in ecclesiastical and partly in modern Bulgarian. From the former of these the present literary language of Russia is derived.

No. 76, *note* [b]—The term 'uncle' signifies respect, not a relation.

No. 78, *note* [a]—This song is from the neighbourhood of Sofia. The natives of that district are considered by their compatriots to be stupid and incapable of development. They are called Shopi, which is a name of contempt, and they are indeed more *naïf* than other Bulgars. It is, however, often asserted that their songs and proverbs are the best in the country.

No. 80, *note* [a]—The only other Bulgarian legend which is founded upon the transformation of men into birds is that of the young wife who was badly treated by her mother-in-law. Wherefore she prayed to God that He should make her a bird; and one day, when the old woman was about to hit her with a pair of scissors, she was changed to a swallow and flew up the chimney. But the scissors caught her before she escaped, as can be seen by the shape of the swallow's tail. (This legend is in prose.)

No. 82, *note* [a]—This song, which is found all over the Balkans, is probably of Greek origin.

No. 83, *note* [a]—Nedela = St. Sunday, being personified by the people. (This saint is also held in particular reverence by the Irish.) There are numerous Holy Petkas. The real one, like many other Bulgarian saints, comes from Greece. The legend is that Czar Shishman, one of the last of the Bulgarian Czars, instead of staying to resist the enemy, fled with Petka's bones to the top of a mountain. An angry old man appeared before him, seized the bones, and hurled them down the mountain, for which reason they are now to be found in all the monasteries of the land.

It is not known why Petka was canonised, but Petuk = Friday, and seeing that Saturday does not count as a religious day, Friday and Sunday go together. Hence the saying: Holy Nedela sleeps in the lap of Holy Petka, *i.e.*, he who keeps Sunday should also fast on Friday. The

Bulgars are very liberal with their saints; they have, for instance, about a dozen St. Ivans of Rilo. Some of these have been so created on the smallest provocation, one of them having been a simple shepherd who chanced one day to cut off a Turk's head.

We also hear of a Saint Wednesday (*Legendes Religieuses Bulgares*, p. 126). A woman is busy preparing the linen on the eve of Wednesday. Then in the middle of the night another woman arrives with a white handkerchief. The water is made hot, but no iron can be found, for which reason the laundress goes to borrow one from a neighbour. She then learns that it is Saint Wednesday whom she is entertaining, and that the iron is intended for her children. She stays at the neighbour's house and vows never again to work after sunset on Tuesday.

No. 85, *note* [a]—*Vide* Appendix.

No. 97, *note* [a]—Stalak is a castle on the river Morava, and is now in Servia. This is a typical song; it is a popular belief that the old Bulgarians sinned too deeply against God (by stabling their horses in churches, &c.), and that therefore the Turks were sent to ravage the land.

No. 97, *note* [b]—It very rarely happens in Bulgarian or in Russian folk-songs that a winter landscape is described. In Bulgarian this instance is unique, for it is a part of the song and not a mere simile.

No. 100, *note* [a]—This is the most popular of all Bulgarian artistic songs. It is the only one in our book of which the author is known, but it has for all intents become a folk-song. Hadji Dimitar and Karadja were the leaders of an insurgent band. In 1868 they came from Roumania, and every one of them was killed in Bulgaria. Karadja, being wounded, was thrown into prison at Tirnovo, and there he beat out his head against the wall. Eight years later the man who wrote this song came himself from Roumania at the head of a band of 150, and these also fell. One of the

first to be slain was their leader, and his grave is unknown. The conflict took place near Vratza, and there a monument has been erected.

Christo Boteff left about fifteen poems of anarchist tendencies, and is considered one of the best lyric poets of Bulgaria. Another of his most popular productions is a Prayer (at the end of which he begs that he may die for his native land), and from it we may quote these lines:

> O God, O my God,
> Not the one who is throned in the sky,
> But who lives in my soul and my heart.

He was educated at a religious seminary in Odessa. Many of his poems were sent to Pencho Slaveikoff's father, but in 1877 Stara Sagora was burnt by the Turks, and only fifteen of the poems survived. Boteff was driven by the police from the seminary and from Russia. He then came to live in Roumania, becoming an active insurgent at the age of twenty. He was afterwards a schoolmaster in a Bulgarian village in Roumania, but most of his time was spent seizing falcons, wolves, &c., with whom he lived and slept. He made strenuous efforts to tame them, for they interested him far more than his human scholars.

No. 101, *note*[a]—A Bulgarian flute is a hollow piece of plane or nut-wood. It consists of three parts, of which the middle one has six and each of the others one hole. The usual adjective is 'honeyed,' from the sound which it is supposed to produce. In Bulgarian the word for honey is *med*, as is also the word for bronze, and bronze flutes are likewise, though nowadays very seldom, found.

No. 101, *note*[b]—By this bread is meant a sort of cake, formed of two layers of bread with cabbage or spinage between them. All this is baked together, and is usually eaten as a delicacy after dinner.

THE ORIGIN AND LANGUAGE OF THE PRIMITIVE BULGARS

By E. J. DILLON

THE ORIGIN AND LANGUAGE OF THE PRIMITIVE BULGARS

HISTORY, like natural sciences, has its fascinating enigmas, which awaken the curiosity and sharpen the ingenuity of the human mind, and often indirectly lead to the most important discoveries. Some few have been or will be satisfactorily cleared up, while others must of necessity remain for ever insoluble; but the story of persevering effort, of genial intuition and clever combination deployed in the attempt to unravel them is sometimes as romantic as an Eastern fairy tale; and the research often widens the field of general knowledge, even when it fails to answer the particular question under consideration. The number of these knotty questions is legion. To what family of the human race did the Armenians originally belong? Is their language one of the Iranian tongues, or does it belong to some other branch of the Indo-Keltic stock? Who was Zoroaster? Where and when did he live and work? For what people were the books, which enshrine his religious teachings, first composed? Who were the Medes, whose law altereth not? To what race did the primitive Bulgars belong? Those

are but a few of the unfathomed depths which the pioneers of historic research are at present engaged in plumbing.

Historic enigmas, like books, have their own peculiar fate. Some puzzles which at first sight seemed, for lack of data, destined to remain eternally obscure, have been unriddled almost without difficulty; while others, which apparently needed but a little ingenuity to solve satisfactorily, are still as dark as ever. Thus the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and the language underlying them, which contain the story of a vanished people and a forgotten civilisation, kept for ages their message sealed as with seven seals, until a genial French scholar set to work, translated the pictures and ideogrammes into the clear phrases of the most modern tongue of Europe and unlocked the treasures which had lain hidden for thousands of years. On the other hand, the rise and spread of one of the great world religions, which shaped the modes of thought and action of some of the greatest nations of the globe, left copious historic monuments and is still professed by thousands of earnest men and women, continue to this day a mystery which there is little hope of unravelling. Even the personality of its founder, Zoroaster, looks to the latter-day scholar as pithless as is that of Melchisedec. We seem, indeed, dimly to descry through the pages of the oldest songs of the Yasna the venerable figure of an Eastern prophet standing in the midst of a group of nomads before a

bright blazing fire—the symbol of Angromainyu, the good spirit—and pouring forth in the rude accents of the Gatha dialect the inspiriting maxims and dogmatic tenets which modified the minds, fired the hearts, and rough-hewed the destinies of hundreds of millions of men. But it is at best a dissolving view, shadowy, evanescent and one wonders how much of it, if any, is founded on fact. Whether the books of the Zend Avesta were written for the Medes, the Bactrians or some other of the Central Asian tribes of the Arian family and when they were composed are matters about which we have many conjectures but no knowledge. And yet there was a moment in the world's history when a form of the faith taught in these books—a form imparted to it by the Manicheans—bade fair to become the religion of the whole civilised world.

The prehistoric antecedents of the Bulgarian people seem equally obscure and the task of the scholar who would fain throw light upon the subject is all the more difficult in that the data of which he disposes are by no means so numerous or so coherent as those of which the student of the Zend Avesta can avail himself. Thus there are no ancient literary or other monuments capable of giving a clue to the national life of the people while it was yet unchanged by contact with foreign tribes, and there are scarcely any trustworthy facts respecting their modes of thought, their religion and their language until they had definitely exchanged their own cul-

tural achievements for those of the races which, surrounding them on all sides in their new fatherland, finally absorbed them. For the Bulgars, now the leading Slav people of the Balkan Peninsula, owe not their name only but much else of what they are and have to a tribe which had nothing in common with the Slav race; was, in fact, foremost among its most formidable and successful enemies. The relations of those hordes towards the Slavonic peoples whom they found in the Balkan Peninsula when they first arrived there were similar to those of the German Franks towards the inhabitants of Gaul, or to those of the Normans towards the Anglo-Saxons. They welded the centrifugal tribes together, infused a political spirit into the clans which were incapable of merging their petty interests and feuds in solicitude for the larger community and forming a united nation. That done, the Bulgars disappeared from the scene for ever, leaving few discernible traces of their presence. Their religion, customs, traditions, and even language disappeared and those of the Slav race took their place. Here, for the first time in history, we are confronted with a curious fact which may be termed the predominant trait of the Slavs as political communities. Clannish in a restrictive sense, they seem constitutionally incapable of rising to the conception of a more extended community of interests than that of the family or the tribe. Hence the framework of their political State was devised and worked by the Norman Variags in

the north and south of Russia, and by the Bulgars in the Balkan Peninsula. In Poland, where they were left to their own devices and their natural centrifugal tendencies had full play, they easily fell a prey to States more predatory and politically more developed than themselves.

Who, then, were those Bulgars?

To that question numerous replies were offered by industrious scholars of Russia, Bulgaria, Germany and Hungary who eagerly tackled the problem, but until quite recently no answer. Besides the scarcity of materials and the difficulty—encountered during the early stage of ethnology—of sifting the wheat from the tares, one of the greatest hindrances to success has been political prejudice, which is answerable for so many other sins against the scientific spirit, especially, but not exclusively, in the Slav world. That the conceptions of race, language, customs, culture should be looked upon as interchangeable and the people who speak a certain tongue at a given epoch identified with the tribe to whom that idiom originally belonged, is an error natural enough in the infancy of scientific investigation. And, like other errors born of ignorance, it is dispelled by the growing light of knowledge. But what no degree of enlightenment can counteract is the preconceived view which has its roots in patriotic prejudice, conscious or unsuspected. When, for example, a man sets himself to trace the rise and determine the origin and language of a great people of antiquity

with the inmost conviction that everything good and great within certain vague limits of time and space must have been achieved by his own race, the result of his investigations is a foregone conclusion, of little interest to science. It was thus that my colleague, the late Professor Bezsonoff, of Kharkoff, discovered that the early inhabitants of every country between Armenia and Venice were Slavs, almost Russians, who left their mark in the names which they gave to towns, rivers and mountains. In like manner Mr. Houston Chamberlain, of whom the German Emperor is one of the most enthusiastic admirers, descries the great Germanic race in every quarter of the globe at almost every epoch of the world's history and some of the most careful of his readers gather from his arguments and his conjectures that he regards Jesus Himself as a German! One will not be surprised to learn that researches conducted on these lines by patriotic Slavs, like the Russian Ilovaisky, led to the obvious conclusion that the primitive Bulgars were Slavs, and that only crass ignorance or invincible bad faith could set them down as Finns, Turks, or Tartars. For to those tribes, and to many others as well, the credit has been variously ascribed of having produced the warriors who arrived on the right bank of the River Pruth towards the end of the seventh century, cemented the Slavs into one great political community and gave their name to the people who have played a part in European history as Bulgars.

It is hardly too much to assert that one of the most remarkable feats achieved by latter day science, purified from political bias and other alloy, is precisely the identification of the warlike hordes which made their appearance on the scene of European history in the Balkan Peninsula under the name of Bulgars, passed over to the right bank of the Danube, marched to the gates of Salonica and Constantinople and wrested Moesia from the Emperors of Byzance. For not only are the data slender but they seemed at first to lend themselves equally well to conflicting interpretations. It is amusing, as well as instructive, to compare a few of those contradictory results, for it is only by obtaining a clear conception of the difficulties which had to be overcome before the problem could be solved definitely and satisfactorily that we can realise the progress made by science and the success scored by its most eminent representatives in that particular branch of research. In the year 1870 one of the most learned of Hebrew Orientalists,* discussing the data found in the writings of Musulman authors, gave it as his opinion that the nationality and language of the primitive Bulgars was determined once for all in the sense that they were neither Turks nor Finns nor Slavs, but Ugrians. Chwolsohn's fellow-countryman and opponent, A. J. Harkavy, maintained, on the contrary, that the whole question was a ravelled

* Chwolsohn, then Professor in the University of St. Petersburg.

skein. Nine years later another eminent scholar * declared that the nationality of the Bulgars had been once for all determined. Again from the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* we learn that "the Bulgarians were originally a people of Ugrian or Finnish extraction—according to Professor Roesler, a Samoyede race." The Russian *Encyclopædic Dictionary* of Brockhaus and Ephron in one place describes the primitive Bulgars as a "nomadic people of Ural-Tshud or Finnish extraction," † and in another declares that they were "a people of Turkish origin, with whom were subsequently mixed Finnish and even Slavonic elements." ‡ In the *Grand Dictionnaire Universel* of Larousse the Bulgars of to-day are stated to be "a nation of Scythian or Slavo-Tartar extraction." § Bouillet ‖ sets them down as a mixture of Finno-Ugrian and Slavonic races. E. Reclus, on the other hand, holds that they come of an Ugrian stock, like the Huns, while their language resembles that of the Samoyedes.

Thus the number and variety of the views put forward on the subject and the downright confidence in the absolute correctness of each theory which some, at least, of its adherents display, give

* Sokoloff: *Concerning the Ancient History of the Bulgars*, p. 89.

† Vol. IV., p. 261. ‡ Vol. IV., p. 895.

§ *Cf.* Shishmanov: *L'Origine des anciens Bulgares*. Sofia, 1900. (In Bulgarian.) Page 11.

‖ *Dictionnaire Universel d'histoire et de géographie*. Paris, 1893. Page 300.

us the measure of the difficulty with which the problem is beset. The story of the methods by which these difficulties have been finally overcome would, if dealt with in a fitting spirit, constitute one of the most entertaining chapters of the fairy tale of scientific research. The scholar who has materially contributed to attain this remarkable result is himself a Bulgar and a member of one of the very oldest families of the race for whose past history and present culture he has accomplished so much. Dr. Ivan Shishmanov, Professor at the University of Sofia, whose book on the subject is classical and exhaustive,* began his research by eliminating all secondary points which have no direct bearing upon the main issue. The questions which he set himself to study and, if possible, to answer, were these: What language did those early Bulgars speak, whom contemporary annalists described as the terror of European peoples? Could it have been Slav or Finnish? If neither, was it a Turko-Tartar tongue and, if so, to which of the groups of this family of languages did it belong? If it was not akin to Finnish dialects, how are we to explain those words found in its remains which moved eminent scholars to claim for it linguistic kinship with the Chuvash tongue? Secondly, where was the home of the primitive Bulgars and by what means is it to be discovered if neither historic testimony nor even native tradition afford us a trust-

* It is written in Bulgarian.

worthy clue? Professor Shishmanov, it need hardly be said, has had many predecessors and fellow-workers in the field, and lays no claim to any startling discovery of his own. Every aspect of the question had been thoroughly studied before. The narratives of the Byzantine annalists, the allusions of later historians, the reports and conjectures of Arab and Armenian writers had all been carefully edited and ingeniously commented by the most eminent representatives of the various branches of history or philology interested. Professors Chwolsohn, Harkavy, Rosen, Emin, Patkanoff, Sreznevsky, Miklosich, Yagitsch and a host of others had materially contributed to collect and sift the materials from Eastern and Western sources. But the result was, as we have seen, chaos. No theory had been propounded which satisfied all scholars or even disposed of all the difficulties that naturally presented themselves to the mind of the unbiassed student. The very words of the ancient Bulgarian tongue which have come down to us were interpreted, now as Slav, now as Tartar, now as Finnish. Thus the term αλοβογοτουρ is explained by Tomaschek as = Turkish, *ala* = shepherd and *bagatur* = hero, and by the patriotic Russian Professor Ilovaisky as compounded of two Russian words, *bog* and *tur*, and so on to the end of the chapter, each scholar finding exactly what he had himself brought to the study of the subject. Again some, confounding the modern with the ancient Bulgars, fancied that the

language or the race of the one must be identical with that of the other and that a people which speaks a certain tongue at any one stage of its existence must of necessity belong to the race which spoke that language two thousand years before, so that the inhabitants of latter-day Egypt onght to be Arabs, those of Ireland Anglo-Saxons and the hundreds of thousands of Basques who have wholly forgotten their native dialect in France and Spain should be classed as members of the Latin race.

It was into this bewildering chaos that Professor Shishmanov brought order and harmony, into this Cimmerian gloom that he let the light of knowledge stream. And the simple instrument he employed was scientific method. He imported no new factor into the discussion, just as Wellhausen in his famous *Prolegomena* added nothing to the fundamental data on which he built his now-accepted system. He operated with the materials already acquired to science and upon these he established a theory which, to my mind, presents all the characteristics of a demonstrated fact. Having analysed the passages of ancient writers of the East and West which make mention of the early Bulgars, he passed in review the conclusions to which, in the opinion of his predecessors, those statements unmistakably point. Of those investigators there are three principal groups representing the Slavonic, the Finnish and the Turko-Tartar theory and by

showing clearly and conclusively the unanswerable difficulties and irreconcilable contradictions which emanate from the first two he definitely eliminated them from the list of possible solutions. Turning then to the third, he ingeniously pointed out those errors of his fellow-workers which discredited their conclusions and he fully cleared up those difficulties which their opponents had relied upon to discredit or shake the hypothesis.

The primitive name of the people, Bulgars, is of the highest importance in the researches of Professor Shishmanov; indeed, it may be said to be the corner stone of the edifice which he has succeeded in building. To Priscus, Procopius, Menander, Jornandes and the early Byzantine writers generally, the Bulgars were known as Onogurs, Onogundurs, Sanagurs, Kuturgurs, Hunugurs &c., in a word by names of Hun tribes with whom those authors categorically identify them. But it would be rash to accept the casual testimony of these writers as conclusive on a question of philology which they had no intention of discussing—even if they had possessed the necessary qualifications—and at a time, too, when races and languages were rapidly disappearing before the eyes of cultured Byzantines, who regarded them one and all as barbaric. It is thus that Theophanes often identifies the Bulgars with the Huns, while Constantine Porphyrogenitus holds that they were called Onogundurs before they had occupied Moesia and Bulgars later on. What

is certain is that they bore the name as early as A.D. 501. The Latins, not the Byzantines, contain the first mention of the Bulgars as such. Bishop Ennodius and King Theodoric's minister, Cassiodorus, mention them by this name, and the phrase used by the latter—*Bulgares toto orbe terribiles*—has been often quoted since then. Armenian historians also had knowledge of the hordes in the fifth century; and Moses of Khoren, who wrote about the year 470, interweaves their doings in a story of a rebellion which took place, he says, in the Caucasian mountains under the reign of Arsakes about 120 years B.C. Many of them passed into Southern Armenia, he adds, where the soil was fruitful and corn abundant. He gives us the name of the place where these *Ukhndur-Bulgars* settled as Vanand, which was derived, he tells us, from the name of their leader, Vund. My friend and former Professor Patkanoff was disposed, on the strength of this passage, to identify the Ukhndur Bulgars with the Onogundurs of Byzantine writers.

Now, that passage of Moses of Khoren, although undoubtedly interesting, cannot be used without the corrective of criticism, which indeed is needed by many other of that historian's statements. He is utterly mistaken as to the date when the Bulgars settled upon the fertile land in the south of Armenia. My friend Patkanoff, with whom it was my privilege to study the question, proved conclusively, as it seems to me, that the account given by Moses refers

to the third century A.D.,* and was taken by him from a Syrian writer named Mar Abbas Katina.

In the second half of the sixth century Byzantine writers allude to the Bulgars under this name and the old synonymous terms, like Onogurs, &c. are wholly discarded. Their remarks do not, it is true, throw any certain light upon the stock to which the people belonged; but one thing they make quite clear, that the primitive Bulgarian tongue was not Slav, from which some of them are careful to distinguish it. The conclusion to which this significant fact points is further borne out by the distinction made even by the remains of the Church Slavonic literature between the names by which they designate the princes of the country on the one hand and the language on the other. The princes are termed Bulgars and the tongue spoken by the people Slovenian. For the Bulgarian tongue had in the meantime wholly disappeared in the Slav. From the *Life of St. Demetrius of St. Salonica*, which dates from the eighth century, we learn that in the Council of the Bulgarian Tsar there were men who understood Greek, *Bulgarian* and *Slovenian;* and those chroniclers of that century who lived in the reigns of Tervel and Krum draw a sharp distinction between Bulgarian and Slovenian contingents. And even the old Russian monk and annalist, Nestor,

* *Cf.* Patkanoff: *On the Inscription of Van.* (In Russian.) *Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction*, St. Petersburg. 1875.

never included the Bulgars among the Slavs, but classified them together with the Ugrians, Khazars and Avars.

Another group of witnesses from whom some helpful clue to the problem might have been reasonably expected are the celebrated Arab geographers who from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries explored the principal regions of the old world and materially contributed, by the varied data which they brought back, to extend our knowledge of its people and of their modes of living and thinking. The Arabs were at bottom a nomad race, who delighted in moving about from place to place. And Mohammedanism failed to change that restlessness, but turned it—as, indeed, most other natural characteristics of the people—into a religious channel. Hence the never-ending pilgrimages to Mecca, which continue to this day, to say nothing of the many pious expeditions undertaken by the early adherents of the Prophet for the purpose of spreading the teachings of Islam or preparing the ground for proselytising by collecting information respecting the various nations of the globe. Typical examples of these dauntless explorers, who confronted the dangers of long journeys—formidable in those days of slow locomotion and general mistrust of strangers—buoyed up by that ingrained fatalism and firm religious faith which is one of the most salient traits of Moslems throughout the world, were Massudi, Ibn Foszlan, and Ibn Dasta in the tenth century.

For students of the early Bulgars Ibn Foszlan is one of the most important of this band of pioneers, because in the year 922 he accompanied an embassy sent by the Caliph Muktedir to the Mohammedan Bulgars on the Volga, who are rightly regarded as kinsmen of the tribes which had settled in the Balkan Peninsula and were ultimately swallowed up by the Slavs. In all probability Ibn Foszlan was but the secretary of the mission, but what is certain is that he drew up a detailed report for his royal master Muktedir. The primary object of the mission was to strengthen the faith of the newly-converted tribes, who had succeeded in founding a powerful kingdom, to build them a temple and to help to defend them against foreign foes; and Muktedir had been requested to take this step by the monarch of the Volga Bulgars, Baltavara. This prince's territory was bounded by that of the Slavs, its capital was known as Bulgar and the river which flowed through it was called Itil (Volga). The descriptions left by Ibn Foszlan are entertaining and instructive: in some respects more interesting still are the detached words of the language which he has recorded in his narrative. Thus after dinner a drink was brought to the whole party made of honey, "which they call satzy." The chronicler tells us that when the formula was uttered: "May God bless the Tsar Baltavara!" "I told him that God alone is Tsar, and that none else should assume that name."

And yet, strange to say, although we thus have for

several centuries a series of short notices which, considering the curiosity of the writers and the exceptional opportunities which they enjoyed, might suffice to clear up some of the doubts and dark points which render historic research arduous and unsatisfactory, the sum total which they contribute to our knowledge of the subject is extremely small. Indeed, it consists in little more than those native words, customs and casual definitions which enable us to make surmises, but are seemingly inadequate to establish facts. Certainly the opinions of the Arab geographers themselves are conflicting, and have been relied upon with equal confidence by almost every investigator to confirm his own scientific or preconceived theory. Thus Ibn Foszlan speaks of the ruler Almas Ibn Shalki Baltavar as Tsar of the Slavs; for him Bulgar, the capital of the realm, is a Slavic city and the kingdom is a Slavic kingdom. And, curiously enough, Ibn Dasta, who wrote in the first third of the tenth century, is at one with Ibn Foszlan on all these important issues. He informs us that the river Itil (Volga) flows between the territories of the Slavs and the Khazars. Hadji Halfa confirms this view, identifies Slavs and Bulgars and adds that their habits and customs differ nowise from those of the Russians.

How little reliance can be placed on those expressions of opinion may be gleaned from the fact that the famous Massudi, on the other hand, regards the Bulgars as a Turkish, not a Slav, tribe, and that

Edrisi,* also a serious Arab geographer, holds the same view, including, however, among the tribes of Turkish stock the Kimaks, Bagargars, Mokhamans and many others whom he describes as idolaters and fire worshippers, cruel in character and coarse in manners. As for the Bulgars he largely qualifies his statement by admitting that their culture resembles that of the Greeks and their capital city, Bulgar, was inhabited by Christians as well as Moslems. Finally it should be borne in mind that the evidence of other Musulman explorers and travellers favours a hypothesis wholly different from those which the two groups mentioned above seem to countenance. Thus Istakhri† has no hesitation in saying that the Bulgarian language resembles the dialect spoken by the Khazars,‡ while Ibn Haukal§ underlines the likeness between those two tongues, but finds a difference between the Khazar dialect and that of the Burtas (Volga Bulgars). Unfortunately, he has given us no specimen of any of those languages, so that we lack the means of estimating the worth of his judgment in matters philological. One conclusion, however, we are forced to draw from the statements made by him and most of his travelling countrymen: that they

* *Cf.* Jaubert: *Géographie d'Edrisi*, Paris, 1840.

† He wrote about the middle of the tenth century.

‡ "Bulgarorum genuinorum lingua similis est linguæ Chazarorum." *Cf.* Dorn: *Mém. de l'Acad. de St. Petersbourg.* VII., p. 484.

§ About the year 967.

did not regard the Bulgarian as a Slav tongue. According to Ibn Foszlan the Khazar differed very much from Turkish and Persian, so much indeed that it has nothing whatever in common with either, or with the language of any other known people,* and as the Bulgarian dialect was a Khazar tongue—in the opinion of Ibn Haukal—it is manifest that the latter writer did not regard the Bulgars as an offshoot of the Slav stock.

The adherents of each of the three principal theories of the origins of the Bulgars can therefore appeal with equal confidence to the testimony of Arabic sources, the philological value of which is consequently proportionately slender. Nor is that all. The Mohammedan travellers whom I have heretofore mentioned are agreed at least in this, that the Bulgars constitute a homogeneous people, who are united by the ties of a common language, common traditions and a native culture. But other Moslem writers are convinced, on the contrary, that the so-called nation of Bulgars is but an ethnical mosaic of tribes and tongues. Biruni, for instance,† informs us that they did not speak Arabic, but only a *mixture*

* *Cf.* also Ouseley: *The Oriental Geography of Ibn Haukal.* London. 1800. This scholar mistranslates an important passage of the author from whom he quotes: "their (the Khazars') language is like that of the Turks and is not understood by any other nation." It should, of course, be "unlike that of the Turks."

† *Kitab el atâr. Cf. Livre des Monuments*, publié par Quatremère, p. 404. *Cf.* also Shishmanov, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

of Turkish and Khazar. His co-religionist, Shems-Eddin Muhammed Dimeshki, narrates, in a well-known work,* that once a band of Bulgars, passing through Bagdad on their way to Mecca, were asked to what race they belonged and who the Bulgars really were, and that they answered: "We are Bulgars, and the Bulgars are a people formed by the mingling of Turks and Slavs."

Between the first and the seventh centuries of our era the Balkan Peninsula was at once a caravanserai and a battlefield of nations. Empires rose and fell there, civilisations mingled and changed, religions spread or decayed, gods were degraded to the level of demons and monarchs raised to the rank of gods, languages were modified or forgotten. In the province known to-day as Transylvania, the Dacians, whose Empire extended from the Danube to the Carpathians and from the Tissa to the Dniester, at first defied, then threatened the Romans and were afterwards conquered and annexed by one Emperor and finally their territory was handed over by another to the barbarians, whom he despised and feared. The conqueror of Dacia, Trojan, was besung by Slavic bards. His praise is still chaunted in the ancient songs of the Ruthenians. In the Serb folk tales he appears with three heads and waxen wings, and by many of the early Slavs he was worshipped as a god.† Another powerful tribe

* *Nokhbet-el-der.*

† For example, in the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Salvation*, a MS. of the sixteenth century.

which, during the second and third centuries, resisted the Romans on the Danube, was known as the Carps, who in all probability were Slavs. They and the Sarmatians were at different times violently transported by hundreds of thousands to the Balkan Peninsula, which was thus peopled in the north by men of Latin descent, in the centre by Greeks and in the south by Thraco-Illyrians. Those Carps, who gave their name to the Carpathians, formed the first wave of the great Slav immigration into the Peninsula. Slowly and peacefully and in moderate numbers they came, at first as Roman colonists, and during two hundred years they maintained their reputation as quiet harmless citizens.* But later on they, too, banded themselves together for predatory purposes, and set out on military expeditions against their neighbours. And they kept on spreading over an ever-widening area. Already in the beginning of the fifth century we meet with the names of dignitaries of the Byzantine Empire who were unquestionably of Slavonic parentage. Many of Justinian's generals were members of that race and it is almost certain that that Emperor himself was a Slav.

The colonisation of the Balkan Peninsula by active and healthy tribes, Slavs and others, speedily brought prosperity to the region, which had thereto-

* *Cf.* Drinoff: *The Colonisation of the Balkan Peninsula by Slavs.* Moscow, 1873. *Cf.* also Iretchek: *Czasopis Czeskeho Musea.* 1874. 501.

fore been nearly deserted. The population, great in numbers, advanced in culture, increased in wealth and excited the covetousness of Goths and Huns, who, invading their territory, swept away almost every vestige of civilisation there. Before the hordes of Ostgoths the entire population of Thrace vanished, as a Swiss farmhouse might cease to be after the passing of a mighty avalanche. The Ostgoths were followed by the Slavs, who were thus settled everywhere from Greece to Dalmatia, and by the Bulgars, who towards the close of the seventh century are said to have come upon the stage of European history by deploying a military force which, through its perfect organisation and iron discipline, imposed its will upon tribes far more numerous and cultured than itself.

No one knew exactly whence these Bulgars had come. They are, indeed, mentioned more than once before their advent in the Balkan Peninsula, once in a Greek work and once in an obscure Slav document known as the *imennik*, which contains a list of Bulgarian Tsars from the oldest times to the year 679 and a number of words the meaning of which is still disputed, as they were probably taken from the language of the tribe.* After the death of one of their rulers, named Kurt or Kuvrat,† a contemporary and ally of the Emperor Heraclius, the Bulgars divided into five hordes, each one under the

* Edited by Popoff (in Russian). Moscow. 1866.

† A.D. 522.

leadership of one of Kuvrat's sons. The eldest son, Batbai, presided over the destinies of that section which remained in its ancient home on the shores of the Azoff Sea and on the banks of the Kubân River; the second son, Kotrag, led his men over the Don, while the third section chose Pannonia for their home; the fourth is alleged to have penetrated into Italy, while the youngest son, Asparukh, the chieftain of the hordes whose influence on the history of the Balkan Peninsula afterwards became so incisive, settled in Bessarabia. Whatever truth there may be in the alleged facts relating to the migration of these Bulgarian tribes, there is an obvious error in the chronology. For long before the seventh century this split among the Bulgarian hordes must have taken place, seeing that their settlement on the banks of the Danube is recorded by historical writers. The Goth historian Jornandes, who lived in the sixth century,* tells us that there were Bulgars already on the north-western shore of the Black Sea, whence they were wont to plan and carry out predatory incursions in the domains of the inhabitants of the Danube districts. King Theodoric, the Ostgoth, scored two victories over the Bulgars and dispelled the widespread belief that they were invincible.† Towards the middle of the seventh

* A.D. 522.

† For these facts Theodoric's Minister, Cassiodorus (487–526), vouches, and his testimony is confirmed by that of Bishop Eunodius, his contemporary.

century the Bulgars oi the Danube were ruled by Asparuch, as the Greeks called him, or Isperich, as he is named by his subjects. His territory was situated on a strip of land between the Dniester, the Danube and the Black Sea, whence his hordes sallied forth from time to time to lay waste the lands of Moesia, on the other side of the Danube. The efforts of the Byzantine Government to check these predatory expeditions were generally unsuccessful, and in one engagement so completely were the Emperor's forces beaten that Isperich's enterprising troops advanced to the city of Varna, striking terror whithersoever they went. The Greeks, disheartened, gave up the struggle, while the Slav population, powerless to carry on the fight, resignedly submitted to the conquerors. Yet the success of the Bulgars was their undoing. Their empire grew in extent, one Slav tribe after another acknowledging their supremacy until at last it was co-terminous with the Balkan Peninsula. But the conquerors themselves were tamed, civilised and transformed by the conquest. The Bulgars gradually abandoned their nomadic life, slackened their military discipline, built houses, learned to read, write and speak the language of the Slavs, and were finally absorbed by the latter, upon whom they had bestowed, together with their name, the boon of political unity.

The destinies of the other four sections of the Bulgarian people differed for a time from those of Isperich's hordes, but their end was the same—

absorption. The most numerous migrated somewhat later to the banks of the Kam and Volga, subjected the Finnish population there as their brethren had subjected the Slavs, founded a puissant empire known as Great Bulgary, of which the capital city was called Bulgar, embraced Islam * and flourished down to the thirteenth century, when their power was broken by the Tartars. Some scholars, who hastily draw conclusions from language to race, fancy that the latter-day Chuvashes of the Government of Kazan in Russia are the descendants of the founders of Great Bulgary. But whatever linguists may say of the Chuvash dialect, the Chuvash people are undoubtedly Finns, and have as little in common with the Bulgars of the Volga as have the subjects of Prince Ferdinand with the Bulgars of Moesia. The tribes which had settled in Hungary quarrelled with their neighbours and migrated to the Franks, who exterminated them all but a few, who found a refuge in Italy, where, in the ninth century, they still spoke the Bulgarian tongue.†

Our knowledge of the manners and customs of this new human factor in the Balkan Peninsula is very defective and barely suffices to render it highly improbable that they were either Finns or Slavs. They were a people who, to use the apt expression

* In the year 922.

† Paulus Diaconus, V. 29. *Cf.* Drinoff: *Origins of the Bulgars*, p. 64 (Russian); Iretchek: *History of the Bulgars*, chap. V. (Russian edition.)

of K. Iretchek, lived by and for war. In that respect one might compare them with the Germans of the nineteenth century, for military discipline appears to have constituted their first care. There was no retreat from before the enemy, and if any soldier showed fear, fled from the battlefield or disobeyed orders, he was invariably put to death with accompaniments of refined torture. Nobody was allowed to leave the country, the frontiers of which were vigilantly guarded by numerous hordes of troops well armed and mobile, besides which, if the Arabs are to be credited, the realm of the Tsar was actually surrounded with a prickly wall. Before going to battle a competent inspector was sent to examine the condition of the horses, the men and the arms, and if they fell short of the standard of efficiency no mercy was shown to the offenders. A horse's tail was the military standard, which was borne aloft at the head of the troops. Although the men were trained as if nothing depended upon chance, Fate or its equivalent was believed to bear a part in the result. For there were lucky and unlucky days, and on the latter the leaders sedulously shunned an engagement lest the unseen powers should bring about defeat. And in other of the salient events of human life superstition played an important *rôle*; sickness, for instance, was treated by means of strings hung round the patient's neck, or of charms which usually took the form of stones. Distinguished personages were burned after death, together

with their living wives and servants; or, if they were buried in a mound, as was often done, their spouses and attendants were likewise immured alive. Although the staple food was meat, only the flesh of certain animals was deemed pure. But as animal food formed the *pièce de résistance* of every repast, the Bulgars were at a loss what to do when they had none. Hence they were dismayed to learn, when they were preparing to embrace Christianity, that Christ's followers had also to abstain and fast. And with trepidation they inquired how many such fast days there were in the Christian year. Every man took at least two wives, while the magnates possessed numerous harems, which they transported with them whithersoever they went. Women as well as men wore baggy trousers, and the former kept their faces covered, as is the wont of Mahommedan women to-day. The men shaved their hair and wore turbans like those of the Turks and Arabs. Crimes against property, especially horsestealing, were punished generally with death; but the prisoner's confession would seem to have been a necessary condition of the execution of the definite sentence. Hence thieves taken red-handed were exhorted to avow their crimes, and those who refused were beaten with a cudgel on the head or pricked in the haunches with a piece of sharp iron until they confessed. Money there was none, so that the medium of such trade as the Bulgars carried on was cattle and horses.

Court etiquette was peculiar and Asiatic. The Tsar, who was known as the Khan, was treated in some respects as a sort of demi-god. He ate his meals at a separate table, and no one, not even his favourite wife, was allowed to sit beside him. The courtiers, at a considerable distance from His Majesty, either sat on seats or squatted on the ground. Human skulls were often employed in lieu of goblets at Court symposia and other banquets. Whenever a treaty was concluded, the Bulgars swore on an unsheathed sword to abide by its terms, and then by way of sealing the compact they split a living dog in twain. The form of government may be described as aristocratic, for the Tsar was assisted by a council of six magnates, whose advice was asked for and listened to on all important questions.

Those data are truly slender; but at least they lend no support to the contention of those scholars who feel disposed to identify the primitive Bulgars with either the Slav or the Finnish hordes, whose customs were very different. In order to reach more definite results we must have recourse to the help of philology.

But it is obvious that the testimony of Byzantine, Latin, Armenian and Arab historians needs very careful sifting before it can be employed as an instrument of linguistic research. And the first Europeans who turned their attention to the subject —the Polish historiographers of the sixteenth century—lacked the certain means of winnowing the

chaff from the wheat. Knowing, as they knew, that the Bulgars of their day spoke a Slav dialect, they had no hesitation in setting down them and their forbears as a branch of the Slav race, and this view generally acquired the consistency of a dogma of scientific faith. The first sceptics to throw doubts upon the tenet were German scholars, who, struck with the unanimity of those ancient writers, who drew a very sharp line of demarcation between the early Bulgars and the Slavs, felt unable to conclude that the language spoken by the people of to-day must necessarily be of the same stock as the dialect in vogue there over a thousand years ago. Forcible objections against the prevalent theory, rather than positive data for a new hypothesis, characterise the investigations of the new school of historic criticism. Ludwig Schlözer, in a work on history,* maintains that whereas the contemporary Bulgars are unquestionably Slavs, those who first gave their name to the people, after having migrated from the banks of the Volga, belonged to a very different race, and were in all probability a Turkish tribe. This conjecture, for it was hardly more, was next taken up by a fellow countryman of Schlözer's—Johann Thunmann—who in a work published three years later† lays it down that the primitive Bulgars had nought in common with the Slavs, but were allied

* *Allgemeine nordische Geschichte.* Halle. 1771.

† *Untersuchungen über die Geschichte der östlichen europäischer Völker. Erste Theil.* Leipzig. 1774.

by blood relationship to the Magyars. To this conclusion he was forced, he said, by the manners and customs of the people, which so closely resembled those of the early Hungarians; but even Thunmann makes no attempt to apply the comparative method in the study of the culture or the languages of the peoples in question; but what he does is to point out by examples—such as the word Khagan, by which the Bulgarian prince was designated—the help which might be obtained from philology applied to the problem. Thunmann holds that the proper names which have come down to us from early Bulgarian times differ essentially in physiognomy from those of the Slavs, and, as he thinks, resemble those of the Magyars. Thus the Bulgars, like the Hungarians, are often called Huns. The sons of the Bulgarian Tsar who ruled in the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus were named, according to him, Kan Artikinos and Bulias Turkan respectively, and these names he explains by comparing them with their Turkish equivalents.

Johann von Engel, the next scholar who touches on the subject, goes a step further in his history of the Bulgars in Moesia,* and refuses to distinguish between the Bulgars of the Volga and those of the Kam district. He has put forward among other proofs for the Tartar origin of the people arguments apparently drawn from the domain of philology. But his reasoning is vague and lacks the true

* 1797.

scientific character. The proper names which have been handed down to us, he says, have a Tartar sound and cannot therefore be Slav. But of a close etymological analysis of any of these terms there is of course no trace. None the less, his contention made considerable headway in Europe, and was accepted even by some of those Slavs who would gladly have attributed to one of their own tribes the doughty deeds of the people who advanced to the gates of Constantinople and wrested Moesia from the power of Byzance. Thus the famous Russian historian Karamzin endorses the view put forward by Engel, and unfolds his own theory in the very words of Thunmann.* But, as Professor Shishmanov remarks, the rise of the romantic school of Slav history coincided with the triumph of national prejudice as opposed to scientific method. The Turco-Tartar theory was highly distasteful to the patriotic, or shall we say racial, sentiment which took possession of scholars no less than of politicians, and it was summarily cast aside as the fruit of German investigation. Facts were coloured, twisted, created; principles, especially those philological principles which have since come to be recognised as fundamental, were ignored, or rather wholly unsuspected, phonetic laws had not yet been formulated, and, availing himself to the full of this absolute freedom

* *Cf.* Shishmanov, to whose admirable work (in Bulgarian) on the origin of the Bulgars, I am indebted for a great part of my essay.

of thought, a Ruthenian of the Carpathians, named George Venelin, elaborated a series of patriotic and pseudo-scientific propositions * which were hailed with joy by almost all the Slavs of Europe. They were mainly directed against the thesis put forward by Engel, and consisted chiefly of unproved affirmations. Thus if the proper names and titles of the early Bulgars, which have been preserved in literary documents, have a Tartar sound for the ears of a German professor, they possess, he affirms, a true Slavonic ring for the Russian, Bulgar or Serb. 'National honour and glory' were among the motives which fired the imagination and coloured the convictions of Venelin. They moved him to attack the theories which denied to the Slav race the glamour that distance lends to the gory deeds of the Bulgars, and bestowed it upon mere Turks and Tartars. Because certain mediæval writers confounded Bulgars and Huns, argued Venelin, other writers of to-day have worked out a Turco-Finnish theory to dovetail with their testimony. Thereupon the ardent young patriot set to work to prove that the Bulgars were pure Slavs, and as the Huns were Bulgars he goes on to show that these too were Slavs. Attila, therefore, was a compatriot of the subjects of Rurik. So, too, were the Khazars, the Avars and even the Goths; so that if the Slavs of the twentieth century should harbour designs on all Eastern and Central Europe, they are only claiming

* *The Ancient and Modern Bulgars.* Moscow. 1829.

their own. In this spirit the work is written, and it would be mere waste of time to discuss the author's arguments, which have nothing in common with scientific investigation.

Bulkoff, a fellow-countryman of Venelin's, did little to raise the discussion from the level of race prejudice to that of scientific research, and did much to spread the Slav theory of the origin of the early Bulgars. He grounded his main argument on the assumed impossibility of any Tartar race becoming so completely and so rapidly assimilated by the Slav people as to lose their language, traditions and culture in the short space of 190 years. Such a sudden and entire disappearance of a nation and a language is, he argued, an utter impossibility. History has no parallel for the process, and science is therefore unable to conceive it. As for the proper names on which such stress had been laid, he chose a few which the Germans had neglected to mention or discuss, and which are undoubtedly Slavonic, and on these he relied as proofs of the Slav extraction of the Bulgars.

With the exception of one Bulgarian savant named Krstovich, none of the modern scholars enumerated took stock of the valuable materials for a judgment which the Arab geographers had for ages accumulated. They contented themselves with Byzantine sources, and confined their discussions to the data afforded by these. Nor had they much choice in the matter. The first investigator who turned his

attention to the Oriental sources and unsealed them to the historian was Fraehn, whose monographs, published in St. Petersburg, on coins of the Volga-Bulgars, and on the most ancient Arab accounts of that people, came to the scientific world as a sort of revelation, raising historic criticism to a height which it had never attained before, although moderate enough by comparison with later ascents. Fraehn addressed himself in the first place to the questions: Who were the primitive Bulgars? To what race did they belong? But the fresh factors which he brought into the discussion, although valuable, were neither abundant nor absolutely trustworthy, and this he frankly admitted. On them alone, therefore, it would be impossible to ground a theory, but at any rate they would, he maintained, have to be taken into consideration by every student of the origins of the Bulgarian nation.

The way in which Fraehn himself profited by the new materials left much to be desired, especially when they were purely philological. An instance may serve to illustrate his method. Ibn Foszlan relates that he was delegated by the Caliph Muktedir Billahi to the Tsar of the Slavs, who was called Baltavar Almus, son of Shilki. Now Baltavar was, according to Fraehn, not a name but a title which the Bulgarian ruler took, probably before he had become a Mohammedan. What does it mean? How is it to be etymologically explained? On this subject the savant consulted Professor Senkovsky, who

informed him that it must be the Slav word *Vlatavats*, which in Bosnia and Dalmatia is identical in meaning with the Russian word *vladyetel*; or ruler. It follows, of course, that the assumption that Baltavar is a title and not a proper name must be correct, and, what is more to the point, that it is a Slav title. And this conclusion is further confirmed, he holds, by certain customs described by Ibn Foszlan, which, according to Fraehn, are Slavonic, and also by the circumstance that both Ibn Foszlan and Yakut occasionally employ the terms Slav and Bulgar as synonymous. On the other hand, however, Fraehn confesses that some of the customs of which the Arab writer gives a more or less detailed account are by no means characteristic of the Slav tribes as we know them from various trustworthy sources. Among others, into which it is needless here to enter, that of regarding the left-hand side as more honourable than the right is distinctly foreign to Slav ideas. Again, the name of the Bulgarian ruler Almus is Hungarian rather than Slavonic, in Fraehn's opinion. Almus was also the name of the father of the Hungarian Arpad, the leader of the Magyars in the ninth century. This fact would point to a certain degree of kinship between the Bulgars and the Ugrians or East Finnish tribes, which is all the more probable in that both Istakhri and Ibn Haukal declare expressly that the language spoken by the Bulgars resembled the dialect of the Khazars, who, in Fraehn's opinion, were most probably a tribe of

the Eastern Finns. It would follow, then, from this line of reasoning that the language and the people who were first known in the Balkans as Bulgarian were composed of at least two elements—the Finns and the Slavs. But that is by no means all. In the few survivals of the old language we find forms and words which can be satisfactorily explained only by referring them to a Turkish dialect. Thus the titles *Khan*, *Terkhan*, *Tekin*, and others, as well as the names of several Bulgarian cities on the Volga and the Kam, are to be interpreted in that way. Hence Fraehn concludes that at an early epoch the Bulgars were not pure Finns, pure Slavs, nor pure Turks, but a blend of all three. The basis of this ethnic combination was probably Finnish, which in course of time became modified by an admixture of Slav and Turkish elements. The process ultimately culminated in the Balkan Peninsula by the slavisation of the Bulgars and on the Volga by their transformation into Turks.*

Fraehn's conclusions were well received throughout the academic world, and even in Russia my former professor, V. V. Grigorieff, himself a most ingenious and even paradoxical Russian patriot, contributed to make them popular. But Senkovsky and Savelieff introduced a certain modification into that theory, a modification, too, which seemed warranted by a closer study of the available mate-

* *Cf.* Shishmanov, *op. cit.*, p. 45, where Fraehn's theory is very lucidly unfolded.

rials in so far as they relate to the ethnic elements of the Bulgarian nation. These writers agree, indeed, with Fraehn that these elements are the Finnish, Turkish and Slav; but whereas he held that the Finns constituted, so to say, the base of the combination, they believe that the strongest element in the blend was the Turkish, and the most cultured the Slav. The investigations of Shafarik and others who directed their attention principally to the Ugrian race, its language and customs, in the hope of throwing light on the origin of the early Bulgars, had at least one permanent result: it eliminated the Slav hypothesis altogether, and focussed the efforts of scholars in a sphere which was less distant from the home of the Bulgars than that suggested by Venelin and his followers. But the employment of terms such as 'Turko-Finnish people,' which assumes the kinship of both those races, was calculated to obscure the issues. It is not impossible, speaking *a priori*, that at some very remote period of their unchronicled existence those two peoples may have been one. But as no facts have been hitherto brought forward in support of this supposition, it is utterly worthless as a working hypothesis. Shafarik's fateful error consisted in his setting out with a preconceived view, which confounded the Ugro-Finns with the Turko-Tartars.

In the year 1866 a Russian professor, Popoff, published two manuscripts of the sixteenth century, which were probably copied from MSS. of

the fifteenth century containing in a list of Bulgarian rulers and their genealogies proper names, titles and words which offer fairly adequate philological materials for testing the various theories which had heretofore been put forward. The effect of this discovery upon the investigations of scholars was enormous and beneficent. Among other results the Slav theory was once for all exploded in the eyes of scientific men, although the work of positive construction still advanced with extreme slowness. The Russian, Hilferding, was one of the first to review the whole question from the new coign of vantage thus unexpectedly won; and in his history of the Serbs and Bulgars* he conjectures that the latter people were tribes of a Ural race which wandered about the Steppes of the Volga and the Black Sea. Their nearest kin were the Huns and the later Magyars. The Bulgars of the Kam and the Volga were, in reality, Eastern Finns, who must, nevertheless, have been for a long time under the influence of a Turkish horde to which the peculiarities of their language and customs are alone to be ascribed. The etymology of titles and proper names, with which, however, Hilferding deals in an offhand and unscientific way, is appealed to in support of this view. Hilferding's work had been scarcely three years before the public when Roesler, in some thirty pages of a learned *Study on the People*

* St. Petersburg, 1868 (in Russian). It is commonly referred to as the *Imennik*.

of Roumania,* reformulated the old arguments in favour of the Finnish theory, and strengthened them by new ones drawn from the domain of philology. In the course of his linguistic researches, he had discovered a number of foreign words in the Roumanian tongue, of which he explained the presence by assuming that they had been borrowed from the primitive Bulgars, and ascertained the meaning by comparing them with Samoyede words or roots. One or two instances of this procedure will suffice to give an idea of Roesler's method: *Boyar* (=a grandee, a nobleman) is compared with Samoyede *yier*, *yer* (=prince); the Roumanian word *noian* (=abyss) is declared to be related to Tavghi-Samoyede *noane* (=a diver); the Roumanian *mal* (=bank, shore) is compared with Tavghi-Samoyede *mora*. Among the historical sources from which Roesler derives the principal data for his theory, the writings of Istakhri-al-Farsi and Ibn Haukal play a prominent part. The latter geographer thought he had detected a resemblance between the languages of the Khazars and the Bulgars, whereas the first-named found them identical. To ascertain, then, with certainty what the Khazar tongue really was would, in Roesler's opinion, be to determine the place of the primitive Bulgarian dialect in the family of languages. And this he sought to accomplish with the help of the

* *Romänische Studien*. Leipzig. 1871. *Cf.* chap. v. *Die Völkerstellung der Bulgaren.*

testimony of another Arab chronicler, Ibn Foszlan, according to whom Khazar was utterly different from Turkish and Servian, and had nothing in common with the language of any known people. It would follow from this testimony of a contemporary, therefore, that the Bulgarian was not a Turkish dialect; and as Roesler could show that certain Bulgarian words preserved in Roumanian were Samoyede, there could be little doubt that the hordes which had settled in the Balkan Peninsula and welded the quarrelsome Slavs into a powerful nation there, were akin to the Samoyedes, and consequently men of Finnish race. On the other hand, Biruni's testimony was to the effect that the Bulgars spoke a dialect composed of Khazar and Turkish. This difficulty was solved by Roesler readily enough. A mixed language, he contended, would consist of a basic element and a secondary admixture; and that the essential element of Bulgarian was Khazar, not Turkish, had, he held, been demonstrated by the evidence of Ibn Haukal and Istakhri. The final result of his reasoning, therefore, is that the primitive Bulgarian tribe was Samoyede. The suggestive writings of my former colleagues, Professor Drinoff and Hunfalvy, as well as of Iretchek, contributed considerably to the sifting of the materials and the testing of the results, without, however, throwing fresh light upon the subject. But a new spirit was infused into the researches of scholars by the progress of philology, especially of that branch of

linguistic study the object of which is the Turko-Tartar family of languages. The phonetic laws of the Finnish and Turkish dialects once established, the wild etymological combinations on which the first investigators based their theories vanished into thin air. Scientific methods took the place of individual caprice or patriotic impulse, and brilliant results were attained which will henceforth be associated with the names of Tomaschek, Vambéry and Kunik. Those three philologists have done more than any of their predecessors to solve a most obscure historico-linguistic problem, which would never have been cleared up by means of the historical evidence available. Before Tomaschek's ingenious essay appeared in print* the question which divided investigators was whether the language of the early Bulgars belonged to the Finnish, Turkish, Tartar or Slav stock; to-day not only can it be shown to have been a Turko-Tartar tongue, but we possess the means of determining to what branch of that family it belonged.

Tomaschek, by way of clearing the ground for the linguistic basis on which he builds his own theory, begins by dethroning the Arabs from the places of honour which they had theretofore occupied with the consent of all. They were doubtless curious spirits who were eager to learn and truthful in communi-

* *Cf. Zeitschrift für Oesterreichsche Gymnasien*, and also Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft. Neue Bearbeitung*, 1897. Stuttgart. Article *Bulgaroi.*

cating, but their evidence in matter philological and ethnographical cannot be measured by the standard which we apply to their testimony respecting social and political institutions. Of foreign tongues they were incapable of forming a scientific opinion, whereas they could readily gauge the trend and describe the framework of the political and social machinery of the various countries which they visited. But if one may say that *a priori* their judgment is of little value, it can be demonstrated that the views to which some of them gave currency are wholly untenable. Take, for instance, the statements, categorical enough, if we may judge by their wording, on which the Finnish theory of the origin of the Bulgars is grounded, and we shall find that they have no roots in historical fact. The passive race of the Finns, for instance, could not have given the needful impulse to a migratory movement of peoples. It must have come from a tribe of Turkish nomads. Consequently, the terms Khazar, Bulgar and others are used by the Arab geographers to denote the mass of Turks, rather than any two dialects the phonetic peculiarities of which would not be easily noted by unfamiliar ears. Entering then into concrete details, Tomaschek relies upon a number of words and proper names in support of his view, and seeks to disprove the kinship between the words found by Roesler in the Roumanian tongue and roots with which he compared them in the language of the Samoyedes. Their meaning, he maintains, so far as it can be

determined or divided, will be found by comparing them with words of the Turko-Tartar family of languages.

The considerations which led Tomaschek to regard the primitive Bulgars as a Turko-Tartar people are of three kinds: historical, ethnographical and philological. It is impossible to dwell upon the first two here, although a discussion of the manners and customs of the forbears of the Bulgars would prove much more interesting reading than a disquisition on doubtful words and obscure titles. Here, however, it must suffice to note in passing that among the customs which Tomaschek considers common to the Turko-Tartars and Bulgars are: the cutting of their hair by the men-folk, who left only a few tufts; the wearing of the veil by the women; baggy trousers for both sexes; the wearing by women of ornaments of iron, copper, glass, bone. Their idols were of silver and bronze; on the left-hand side was the place of honour; the principal military force was cavalry, and their standard was a horse's tail.

My friend, Prof. Vambéry of Buda-Pesth, whose services to the cause of historical and philological research it would be difficult to overrate, devoted a chapter of his remarkable work on the *Origin of the Magyars* * to the origin of the Bulgars, and in a closely reasoned essay passed in review the salient

* *Der Ursprung der Magyaren, eine ethnologische Studie.* Leipzig. 1888.

data of history, ethnography and philology, drawing from each conclusions which his vast knowledge of kindred subjects enabled him to confirm or illustrate. The result of his investigations is that the primitive Bulgars were a Turkish tribe, which remained pure from admixture down to the fifth century of our era, when they separated into two groups. From the fifth century onward their physical type and the purity of their language began to alter under the influence of the races with which they thenceforth came in contact. Thus one group of the Bulgars, who wandered southwards and had frequent intercourse with the Slavs, gradually lost their language and their nationality, while the other, driven northwards by the Khazars,* mingled with Ugro-Finns, and underwent a very radical change in all the characteristics which constitute the racial type. Their Turkish dialect was largely modified by the language of their neighbours, and in due time assumed the form of the present Chuvash tongue. That is why this dialect presents so many peculiarities of the Ugro-Finnish family of languages. To that extent, therefore, the latter day Chuvashes are the descendants of the primitive Bulgars of the Volga, and their tongue is a relatively new dialectic formation of a Turkish language, having been shaped by the influences enumerated above, between the seventh and eighth centuries. It follows from this that it has nothing in common with the language

* About the year 650.

spoken by the Bulgars of the Danube. The Slav influence is not, however, absent, but it displays itself mainly in certain customs, such as the removal of the headgear when saluting.

Kunik, a scholar whose name it would be unfair to pass over in silence, accepts the views of Vambéry and Tomaschek, in so far as they establish the Turkish origin of the early Bulgars. The only new factor which he brings into the discussion is the relation of the present Chuvashes to the Bulgarian tribes who devastated Eastern Europe. Despite the poverty of the Chuvash dialect, Kunik, by a sort of semi-conscious intuition, he tells us, divined that the Chuvashes of Simbirsk and Kazan are, if not the surviving descendants of the Kam Bulgars, at least the offspring of the Turkish tribe to which belonged the inhabitants of the Bulgarian Khanate on the Middle Volga. Their language, he added, would sooner or later prove helpful not only in determining the character of the early type of Turkish, but also in determining the ancient Turkish elements to be found among the Bulgars on the Danube and on the shores of the Black Sea, as well as among the Khazars.

The revival of the Slav theory of Venelin, purified of many of its extravagant accessories, but marked by politico-patriotic passions and accompanied by sharp polemical outbursts, is associated with the name of the Russian professor, Ilovaisky, who deployed considerable talent and a certain degree of

ingenuity in endeavouring to persuade scientific men of the truth of a body of unscientific propositions. Ilovaisky wrote much and explained nothing. In one of his best known monographs * he passes in rapid review the materials available, criticises the opinions of the leading scholars who had written before him and endeavours to fit the data of Byzantine, Arab and other historians and geographers to the Procrustean bed of his preconceived view. Sometimes he is reduced to pitiful straits. Here is an instance. Shafarik had asserted, and not without good grounds, that the Slavs were a mild, peaceful people, very different from the wild and warlike Bulgars, and that they entered Moesia gradually in small numbers with the knowledge and permission of the Greek Government. To this Ilovaisky replies that the Slavs, despite their reputation for peacefulness, invaded the Byzantine Empire often enough to establish a claim to military prowess. As for cruelty, they cannot be said to have lacked some qualification for the *rôle* he ascribes to them, seeing that Procopius in his *Gothic War* relates that in the course of an expedition against Thrace in 550 they burned alive a certain Roman commander, having first cut 'straps' from the back. "This cutting of 'straps,' if we may judge by our folk tales, was a common custom of the Slavs." They were to the full as ruthless, he adds, as the Bulgars.

* *Concerning the Slav Origin of the Bulgars of the Danube* Moscow. 1874.

Ilovaisky discerns in the rapidity with which the Bulgars, according to the Finnish or Turkish theories, embraced Christianity, a fresh proof that those theories are untenable. A Turkish or Finno-Turkish people, they lost their language, their customs and their religion in the short space of a hundred and fifty years. And what did they accept instead? The dialect, manners and religion of the weaker race which they had conquered. But this assimilation of "a strong ruling people" by "a weaker and subject race is a phenomenon which runs absolutely counter to historical laws." If the Bulgars were Huns, why did they not preserve their individuality like the Magyars and the Turks? Again, Shafarik had laid stress on the non-Slav character of such manners and customs of the Bulgars as are known to us from the most ancient sources. Thus they offered up the lives of men and animals to their gods; they practised a religious rite of washing their feet in the sea; their rulers had several wives at one and the same time, who fell on their faces before the prince and worshipped him; at the head of their troops, in lieu of a standard, a horse's tail was carried aloft; oaths were administered on the blade of an unsheathed sword, wherewith a dog was then cut into two halves; human skulls were used as drinking vessels instead of goblets; thieves taken *in flagrante delicto* were beaten on the head with a club and had their ribs prodded with iron hooks; baggy trousers formed part of the tribal or national costume;

instead of sitting as Western peoples do, they squatted like Turks and Persians. And to all these more or less objectionable habits, like that of cutting 'straps' from the backs of prisoners of war, Professor Ilovaisky is forced to put in a peremptory claim for his chivalrous Slavs. It is not surprising after this that he should avow that they were in the habit of wearing pigtails and shaving the rest of their heads, that being, according to Procopius, the fashionable mode of dressing the hair among the Huns and Massagetes, who in reality must have been Bulgars, and therefore Slavs.

In philology Ilovaisky is a law unto himself, and, if one may perpetrate a Hibernicism, that law is anarchy. His methods resemble that of the Gascon who, having drunk but sparingly at the Pierian spring, derived the French word *cheval* from the Greek ἱππος by explaining that the first syllable ἱπ was summarily changed into *che* and the second πος into *val.* Nothing is more dreary or more discouraging than this violent thrusting of the roots and flections of one language which you know into the framework of a wholly different language of which you know nothing. Ilovaisky, possessing no knowledge of the Finnish or Turkish dialects, could not realise the all-important fact that the formation of words in those tongues, the modification of roots, of prefixes and suffixes, are all influenced by phonetic laws, which professional philologists have succeeded in formulating after years of laborious research.

The liberty he took, not with words only, but with whole languages, was a wild licence, and it must be added that it is characteristic of the Russian patriotic group of philologists, whose opinions it has wholly discredited. Another follower of that national school, my late colleague, Professor Bezsonoff, publicly maintained that the latter day Venetians were Slavs, and that the fragments of old Slav songs are still occasionally sung by the gondoliers on moonlight nights, and that the name of Lake Van in Armenia was derived from the Russian Christian name Ivan! One of the chief merits of Ilovaisky, which he shares with Venelin, Iretchek and Vambéry is that he insisted on making a distinction between the descriptions given by ancient writers of the Bulgars of the Kam and the Volga and those of the tribes who lived on the banks of the Danube.

These, then, are the principal opinions and theories respecting the origin of the primitive Bulgars, each of them grounded on the same data and each conflicting with all the others. '*Quot homines tot sententiæ*,' one is tempted to exclaim. Now, if the same body of facts is open to so many irreconcilable interpretations, it is clear that either the alleged facts themselves contain a powerful alloy of error, or else that the conclusions drawn from them were to a certain extent shaped by the mistakes or the prejudices of those scholars who sought to interpret and combine them. And the task of the critic is to determine the origin of the errors and

then to correct them. In the first place, it should be premised that the historical materials have increased in number since the days of the first investigators, who had before them only the evidence of the Byzantine and Slav chroniclers. Later on the works of the Arab geographers were placed within the reach of non-Orientalists, and finally the important *imennik* enumerating the first Bulgarian princes was discovered and edited by Popoff. To a considerable extent, therefore, latter-day scholars are more favourably situated than their predecessors. But, curiously enough, the same uncritical procedure is common to many of both; either they make no distinction between the various kinds of evidence which they are called upon to sift and weigh, or else it is a distinction founded on the apparent value of that evidence as an argument in support of a preconceived view. Some students, indeed, like Vambéry and Tomaschek, drew a sharp line between the statements which refer to the Volga Bulgars and those which deal with the Bulgars of the Danube; but a similar line of demarcation has not been drawn between the testimony of men who lived and wrote in the tenth century and that of writers who flourished three or four hundred years later. Nor has full allowance been made for the far-reaching changes which in the ordinary course of things must have taken place in the language and manners of a people whose semi-nomadic habits rendered them peculiarly susceptible to those peaceful influences

which constant intercourse with the representatives of a higher culture invariably exercises. Another cause of the confusion, which could hardly be worse confounded, is the almost automatic way in which scholars, having accepted certain obscure terms employed by Byzantine and Arab chroniclers—words like Khazars and Huns—sought by means of these unknown races to explain that which was itself unknown, *viz.*, the ethnographical and linguistic meaning of the word Bulgar. Thus, to give but one example: three savants, each of them representing a theory of his own, but starting from the hypothesis that the Bulgars and the Huns are one and the same people, came to three different results; according to the first they were Finns, the second held they could only be Slavs and the third proved, as he thought satisfactorily, that they were Turks.

As a matter of fact, the value of the evidence laid before the tribunal of science varies very largely according to the nation, time, language and individuality of the witnesses. Thus the Arab geographers were men who lacked even an elementary knowledge of anthropology, comparative philology and ethnography. Such crude notions as had filtered down to them through the Syrian Nestorians from the Greeks were distorted by their own views of Biblical story, and if we compare the statements which four or five Arab writers make concerning any one people with whose culture and institutions they

had become acquainted, we are struck with the difficulty of fashioning a coherent mental picture, so incompatible with each other are their opinions or accounts. Again, their language is eminently unsuited for reproducing the words of a foreign tongue, owing to the absence of vowel signs. To write as they were wont to write the sentences or terms of a strange language, omitting many of the vowels and giving the consonants, was to furnish a half-formed clay figure which connoisseurs might boldly set down as Turkish, Finnish, Slav or indeed almost anything else without fear of being conclusively refuted. Of the Byzantine authors something similar may be said. Their language is not, it is true, devoid of vowel signs, but it lacks characters for the reproduction of some of the most characteristic consonantal sounds of the Slav, Turkish and Finnish tongues; while the reckless way in which some of the most cultured writers of Byzance applied to the fresh tribes and peoples who were continually coming to the front from the fifth to the ninth centuries the names of old ones is calculated, when thoroughly realised, to shake our confidence in the worth of their testimony as a help to the solution of one of the most entangled problems of ethnography and comparative philology. And yet, when all has been said and done, the most valuable materials remaining to us are precisely words which formerly passed current as Bulgarian; titles, proper names of persons and places, which

were noted and reproduced by Latin, Greek and Arab contemporaries.

It is impossible here to discuss each of those words and titles, to compare them with roots of the various languages to which they have been from time to time ascribed, and to determine in the light of phonetic laws the tongue to which they must originally have belonged. A special analysis of that kind belongs to a work on philology, or to a learned and exhaustive dissertation on the linguistic remnants of the old Bulgarian tongue as handed down by chroniclers or discovered in modern dialects by painstaking scholars of later times. And a masterly treatise on this linguistic and, it must be added, most important aspect of the question is one of the chief features of the lucid work published by my friend Professor Shishmanov, who, if I may venture to say so, has materially helped to determine the nationality of the Bulgarian people. That certain of those terms should wholly elude analysis and remain unexplained is only natural, considering the imperfect medium through which they were preserved to us. The majority, however, have been conclusively traced to a Turco-Tartar source. Another most important discovery which Professor Shishmanov, by his own individual efforts and observations, has placed beyond the region of doubt, is that the Chuvashes of the Volga are not a Turkish but a Finnish tribe, which has still kept many of its ancient mythological beliefs and early customs. Their language, however, is undoubtedly

Turkish, so that it seems in a high degree probable that the Finnish people, who resided here in the sixth century, so far yielded to the powerful Turkish influence to which they were subjected, that they adopted a language wholly different from their own. That language, transplanted to a foreign soil, bristles with peculiarities which can be satisfactorily explained by no other hypothesis. And it is quite possible that the Turkish dialect which was thus engrafted on a Finnish stock was identical with the language of the primitive Turco-Tartar Bulgars who settled on the banks of the middle reaches of the Volga about the sixth century of the Christian era.

Summing up the results definitely acquired to science by the long series of researches which Professor Shishmanov's studies have brought to a highly successful issue, we may lay down the following propositions. The language of the primitive Bulgars is not one of the Slav dialects, otherwise it would not have been so carefully distinguished from them by the author of the *Life of St. Demetrius of Salonica*, which was written in the eighth century,* and by the early literary monuments of Church Slavonic. The testimony of Theophanes,† of Nestor and others‡ points in the same direction and

* Καὶ τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐπιδτάμενον γλῶσσαν καὶ τὴν Ῥωμαίων Σκλάβων καὶ Βουλγάρων καὶ ἁπλως ἐν πᾶδιν ηκονημένον. *Vita S^ti. Demetrii*, in the Acta SS. M. Oct. IV., p. 181.

† Compare *Theophanis Chronographia, ed. Bonn*, 545, 550.

‡ *Cf. Genesi, Begum*, 4, *ed. Bonn*, p. 85.

warrants the same conclusion. Neither was the language of the first Bulgars a Finnish dialect, nor would that theory have been advanced by any scholar acquainted with the two families of languages in question. It was the outcome of a mistaken and unscientific view of the supposed kinship between the Finnish and Turkish races. Having thus eliminated the two hypotheses, which caused most of the confusion that so long characterised the state of the question, we may lay it down that the primitive Bulgarian tongue, so far as it can be classified by means of the few words preserved to us by ancient writers or in modern dialects, offers all the essential characteristics of a Turko-Tartar dialect, and, judging by its phonetic peculiarities, belongs to the south Turkish group of languages. Its resemblance to the Chuvash is to be explained by the fact, now definitely established, that the Chuvashes are Finns, who exchanged their own language for a Turkish dialect. Those Bulgars who settled in the Balkan Peninsula were absorbed by the Slavs just as their fellow-countrymen on the Volga were assimilated by the Finns; but in the former case the language of the conquerors was accepted by the conquered, whereas in the latter it was not. It is further evident that as the Bulgars split up into several tribes, they had a common language before their separation, but we have no means of ascertaining when that separation took place, or what modifications their language and modes of thought under-

went during their wanderings. It is even impossible to throw any light upon the question of the original home of the Bulgarian people by means of the fragmentary notices and isolated words which have been transmitted to us by the chroniclers of the East and West. Certain helpful indications may indeed be gleaned from the remarks of Moses of Khoren and the Armenian author of the *Geography* attributed to him, and these taken in connection with certain peculiarities, noticeable in the Turkish elements of the Magyar tongue, enable us to fix provisionally some of the boundaries of the country which they inhabited. But the clue to the mystery lies in the interpretation of the word *Bulgar*, which is perhaps the most difficult of all the problems connected with this ravelled skein of ethnography and philology.

A whole volume might be filled with the story of the attempts made to explain the word *Bulgar*, and to justify them more or less scientifically from the earliest times down to the present day. Some scholars discerned in the word a geographical appellation, others the name of a historic or prehistoric personage and others again held that it designated a moral or a physiological quality which characterised the people who bore it. The great majority of etymologists, however, derive the word *Bulgar* from the river Volga, many maintaining that it is made up of two elements *Bulga*+*yar* or *ar* (=a Volga man), whereas the Slavic school refer the first portion of

the term to the Slav root *vlaga* (=moisture, water). One of the latter, the Russian historian Karamzin, threw out the suggestion that the river itself was known in early times as Bulgar. According to Roesler *Bulgar* meant water people, river people; Zolotnitsky fancied that it is composed of *buig aer* (=the great country), while another scholar suggested that it might be a Persian word, of which the original form was *bunigar* (meaning the bottom of the cave). Among the names which may have passed from a leading personage to the broad, brown river, some mention Bulgar, others Bolgar, others again Bylar, but who these chiefs were or what they accomplished is a mystery.

The first attempt to impart a meaning to the word was made in the tenth century by a Byzantine annalist, who tells us that the Bulgars took their name from one of their own rulers named Bulgaros. Another writer of the eleventh century, Leo the Deacon, repeats the same story in slightly different terms, and from that time onward down to the twelfth century no explanation of the name is offered by the Byzantines. The Arabs of the twelfth century had their own views on the subject, and the first to express them was Abu Hamid el Andalusi. The legend to which he gave currency ran thus: A pious Mussulman once upon a time visited the city Bulgar (on the Volga) and found the Tsar and his consort lying on their deathbed. Summoned to their assistance he undertook to restore them to

health on condition that the prince together with all his subjects should embrace Islam. The monarch assented, was healed and converted along with his people; and the latter, actuated by gratitude, gave themselves the name of the holy man, which was Bulgar. At the close of the sixteenth century Aashik Muhammed * tells the same story with slight modifications. The wife of a Bulgarian Tsar was fallen ill, he says, and her life despaired of. But she promised a certain holy man who had journeyed thither that she would change her religion for his if he brought her back to health. As soon as he had fulfilled his part of the contract she executed hers, and the people, following her example, the whole nation became followers of Mohammed. The godly man who effected this conversion of a whole people was called Bular, and after him the city was named Bular, which in Arabic was changed to Bulgar.

The well-known Persian writer Mirkhond has a very different tale to tell. According to him the Bulgars are the offspring of Kuman, a son of Japhet, who was very fond of the chase. One day he discovered a delightful climate in the territory which was afterwards inhabited by the Bulgars, and he settled there. In the fulness of time God gave him two sons, Bulgar and Bertas, who, when they were grown up to man's estate, chose places, each one a district for himself. There they cultivated the soil,

* *Cf.* Hammer: *Geschichte der Goldenen Horde*, p. xlvi., 422, 423.

increased and multiplied, and the inhabitants of that land are their progeny. The Tartars who still boast of their descent from the Bulgars of the Volga and the Kam, and have preserved some slender traditions of the splendour of the ancient Bulgarian Kingdom, are wholly ignorant of the stories by which El Andalusi and Mirkhond sought to explain the origin of the name *Bulgar*. Their account of the matter is briefly this: when Alexander the Great set out upon his Eastern war, he hid away in a cave vast stores, and on his return he founded on the spot where the cave was situated a city to which he gave a name composed of a Persian and an Arabic word in memory of the event. Bunigar was the word and its meaning was 'bottom of the cave.' In the course of time the letter 'n' was changed into 'l' and the name transformed into *Bulgar*.

It was not until the thirteenth century that the name *Bulgar* was referred to the river Volga, and nobody knows when this surmise—for at that time it was nothing more—was first put forward. Among others Boguphal, Bishop of Posen, in his *Chronicon Poloniæ*, formulated the hypothesis in a passage which has often been quoted before: *Regnum itaque Bulgarorum a Bulga fluvio nominatur.** Boguphal's chronicle was widely read in those days,† and the Polish annals of following generations gave currency

* *Monumenta Poloniæ historica, tomus II.* Lemberg. 1872. p. 469.

† The second half of the thirteenth century.

to the etymology which passed into Dalmatia, Hungary and Russia, and was commonly accepted by all who took an interest in the question.

Coming down to modern times we find that the etymological interpretations of the term offered by various scholars harmonise more or less with their theories of the origin of the Bulgarian people, so that some look for a meaning in the Slav dialects and others in the Turko-Tartar family of languages. Thus Venelin gives it as his opinion that the root of the word was *Vlaga*, which came to denote first the river and then the people who dwelt on its banks. As a matter of fact, the meaning of the root *vlag* is moist; but the ardent patriot saw no reason why it should not also have signified water. He certainly did succeed in discovering a word in use which closely resembles Volga, namely the Russian term *vologlo*, which in its shortened form is *volglo*. This term is employed to denote a boggy place covered with grass but in which one may sink very deep. There are vast *vologis* in the Ostashkoff District of the Government of Tver, one of which is still known as the Volgoye Lake, and as the accent is on the first syllable the contraction to Volga is natural, nay inevitable. Roesler, who managed to descry the characteristics of the Samoyedes in the ancient Bulgars, had no hesitation in seeking in the Samoyede dialect for the root of the word *Bulgar*. *Bi* or *bu* means water, and *gar* people; so that *Bulgar* = the water people. That the 'l' should

have fallen out is a phonetic phenomenon for which parallels may be easily found. But, as Tomaschek points out, there is no word *bul* = water, anywhere. Tomaschek himself, however, proposes an etymology which is not much better. According to him *bulg'âr, bulâr* means 'mixed,' and comes from Turkish *bulgâmak* (= to mix). Vambéry, on the other hand, sees in the word an indication of the restless character of the people whom it connoted. It is derived, according to him, from the verb *bulga-mak* (= to rebel, revolt), and it means 'the rebel people.' But to continue to enumerate the efforts made to pierce the obscurity which enshrouds the names *Volga* and *Bulgar*, and to discuss the theories on which they are based and the linguistic surmises by which they are supported, would require a volume—not an essay. All those theories may be reduced to three groups, accordingly as they are based on the Slav, the Finnish or the Turkish origin of the Bulgarian people. And as the two former conjectures have already been set aside, their application to the word *Bulgar* is ruled out in consequence. The etymological surmises founded on the Turko-Tartar origin of the people all set out with the assumption that the primitive form of the word was *Bulgár*, with the accent on the second syllable.

Professor Shishmanov very properly asks what grounds we have for this postulate, and what form the word really had in the beginning; and his answer, the first ever yet offered, to the question is as thorough

as that which Kunik gave to a similar query as to the meaning of the word *Russ*. He passes in review the various forms which the term still possesses in Bulgarian dialects—a proof that the national consciousness is by no means as blunted as it was supposed to be, and he deduces from this great variety the great age of the word itself. But the chief advantage of thus comparing the various modifications which the term has undergone in the different dialects lies in the help which we receive towards the determination of the original accent. Much, very much depends upon whether the stress was originally laid on the first or the second syllable; and upon this question light may be thrown not only by the dialectic forms still employed in the latter day Bulgarian tongue, but also by the derivatives of the word in other languages. And the very full, if not absolutely complete, history given by Professor Shishmanov of the word *Bulgar* in almost all the languages in which it was employed, and in many of the dialects as well, from the earliest times down to the present day, is an achievement which will be gratefully remembered by science and by the Bulgarian people.

Virtually all foreign peoples speak of the Bulgars by their national name. The exceptions are few and insignificant, comprising only the Albanians, Gypsies, Roumanians and Spanish Jews. The Arabs had two appellations: *Burtsan* for the Bulgars of the Danube and *Bulgar* for those of the Volga. The Bulgars themselves have at least fourteen dif-

ferent dialectical forms for the word, among which may be noted *Blûgarin*, *Boargarin*, *Bûgarin* and *Bulgarin*. In almost every dialect and language the first letter is B. The exceptions are Greek, where it has of necessity the *v* sound, which is also reproduced in the Latin *Vulgari*, old Norse *Vulgaria* and German, which occasionally offers the forms *Pulcari* and Anglo-Saxon in the word *Pulgaraland*. The first vowel is uncertain, varying according to place, time and dialect. Thus in Latin or Italian we find *Bulgaria* and *Bolgaria*, in French *Boghre* and *Bougre*, and in Armenian *Bolkar* and *Bulgar*. Instead of the letter 'l,' several forms have 'r,' as, for instance, Italian *Burgaria*, and sometimes no substitute whatever, as in the French word *bougre*, owing to the circumstance that in Latin 'l' followed by a consonant is changed in French into 'u,' for instance, calamus = chaume, falsus = faux, *bulga* = *bouge*. Hence the Latin word *Bulgare* changes regularly into *bulgre* and *bougre*, just as sulphur is transformed into soufre. The 'g' is sometimes either dropped wholly, as in *Bular(tai)*, or hardened into 'k,' Armenian *Blkâr*. The 'a' of the second syllable remains in almost all unabbreviated forms; sometimes it is changed to *e*, as in Latin *Bugeri*, Italian *Bulgheri* and Scandinavian *Bolgeraland*.

All those details may seem at first sight unimportant. As a matter of fact, however, they are of the utmost moment; in the first place for the question of the accent, and in the second for the purpose of

determining the original home of the Bulgars. A comparison of the Greek,* Latin, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese forms of the word leaves no doubt that the tone fell upon the first syllable. The dialectic variations which are still found in various parts of Bulgaria to-day confirm this view. Curiously enough, however, the strongest argument in favour of this opinion is drawn from the Provençal form *bolghre* and the French *bougre*, which can have emanated only from the Latin *Búlgarus*. Had the Latin word been *Bulgárus* the French equivalent must have been *bulgáre*, which is the term employed to-day. There are two layers in the lexicographical treasure of the French language, one of which was derived before the twelfth century by the people, the process being unconscious, from Latin, Teutonic and Celtic elements; while the other was introduced mainly by literary men and scholars well versed in modern tongues after the twelfth century. The former group is composed of what are termed 'popular words' which were formed in accordance with phonetic laws, the latter of 'words of scientific origin.' The popular expressions are the resultant of three causes: rhythm, analogy and the tonic accent; the tendency was to shorten the original words, to simplify their sounds and to develop vowels at the expense of consonants.† The action of analogy

* Βούλγαρος, Βούλγαροι.

† *Cf.* Shishmanov, *op. cit.*, page 229 and Ayer, *Grammaire comparée de la langue française*, p. 20.

displayed itself principally in the flection. But the most important part of all perhaps was played by the accent, which has been aptly compared with the pivot on which word-building moves in the Latin tongues. It was invariably left on the syllable on which it had rested in the original word, at least whenever the process was being carried out by the people; and it serves therefore as a test by which we can distinguish such terms from those which owe their right of citizenship to scholars and men of letters. The accent, therefore, taken together with the modification of the rhythm, such as the development of vowels and the dropping of consonants, is the line of cleavage between the two layers of words. For in 'learned words' the consonants are preserved. A few examples will make this clear. The French word soucier is old, and was formed by the unconscious process referred to above, for, derived from the Latin solicitare, it eliminates certain consonants and puts vowel sounds in their place. But the word soliciter, which is likewise French and derives from the same Latin verb, belongs to the other formation, inasmuch as it maintains the consonants. Another instance is afforded by the two words metier and ministère, both of which are French derivatives of the Latin ministerium. Again, when we find a French word with an accent on a syllable other than that which had the tone in Latin we may generally conclude that it belongs to the new layer. Thus facile, which has the accent on the second

instead of on the first, as in the Latin word facilis, is not a 'popular word'; had it been formed in accordance with the phonetic laws which characterise that process of word building it would have appeared as fêle, just as we have frêle from fragilis. It is not surprising then that one and the same Latin word should have passed into French in two different forms, according to the epoch in which they were taken over. One of these forms is 'popular' and has the regular accent, the other is 'learned' and has the tone in a syllable different from the accentuated syllable in the Latin. Instances are orteil and article from Latin articulus; essaim and examen, from Latin examen; hotel and hospital from hospital, avoué and avocat from advocatus, &c. Of such duplicate words there are over a thousand, and among them are the words *bougre* and *bulgare*, of which the former is popular and points to the accent having been on the first syllable, and the second of later formation with the consonant preserved and a wrong accent.

A comparison, then, of all the modifications which this word has undergone in the languages of the world establishes the fact that the accent was originally on the first syllable, and the appellation was *Búlgar*. It follows, therefore, that this form must serve as the point of departure for all etymological speculations about its origin, and that explanations like those given by Berezin, Tomaschek and Vambery, which postulate the word *Bulgár*, are unten-

able. If now, as seems *a priori* probable, the word *Volga* forms an element of *Bulgar*, it is natural enough that the accent should have been on the first syllable, which is the principal of the two ideas. And this was the view taken by Zolotnitsky and Shestakoff, of whom the latter derived *Bulgar* from *Volga* (the Tartar form of which would be *Bulga*) and *yar* (=shore, bank). This etymology would make the term an appellation of a country, not a people, besides which the two syllables *a* + *ya* do not merge, as he presupposes, in *a* except in northern Mongolia.

With respect to the first part of the word *Volga*, scholars are not agreed as to the language to which it originally belonged. We have already seen the Slav schools claim it as their own, on the ground that it is a form of the Slav word *vlaga*, which means moisture. Less biassed etymologists, having shown on many grounds that this explanation will not stand, have come to the conclusion that it is a Finnish word. Among the arguments advanced in favour of this theory there is one grounded on the ending *ga* : which is a very common suffix in the Finnish names of rivers. Here are a few instances of Russian rivers with Finnish names ending in *ga*. Amga, a river in Siberia; Boktyuga (Government of Vologda); Vaga, a tributary of the Dvina; Vayenga (Government of Archangel); Kirenga (Government of Irkutsk); Lyga (Government of Vyatsk); Ossuga (Government of Tver); Mologa (Governments of Tver,

Novgorod and Yaroslav). Professor Shishmanov has collected the names of forty-one such rivers, all of which flow through districts formerly or at present inhabited by Finnish tribes. A large number of streams in northern and central Russia are still known by their original Finnish names.

This suffix *ga* means river, and in West Finnish dialects it assumes the form *yoka*, the root of which is *yok*. From *yoga* the forms *oga* and *ga* are derived. It follows therefore that the word *Volga* itself is composed of two elements *Vol*+*ga*. The word *Vol* enters into the composition of the Finnish designations of other rivers, for instance of the Volma in the Government of Nishny Novgorod, of the Vol-yu in the Government of Olonets. It is impossible, however, to fix with certainty the meaning of *Vol*. Tomaschek held that it comes from *vuly* (=white), and that the Volga received its name from a little lake which was termed the white lake. The main point, however, is that the word *Volga* is of West Finnish origin, a fact which harmonises with the views of certain Finnish scholars, who maintain that the West Finns dwelt formerly on the banks of the middle stretches of the Volga. The name *Volga* appears for the first time in the east of Europe in the chronicles of the Russian monk Nestor,* and in the west in the writings of the Italian friar Carpini.† The curious fact that none of the Finnish tribes living in the Volga basin to-day employ the name

* About the year 1100. † 1246 A.D.

Volga confirms the conjecture, which on philological grounds is almost certain, that it was bestowed by Western Finns.

It is a curious fact that historical ethnography has ascertained more about the Finnish races which have disappeared than about those whose descendants are still settled in Russia. Indeed, it is only by the help of philology that we can fix the ethnographical boundaries of the Finnish tribes in ancient Muscovy; and of those which dwelt on the shores of the middle Volga very little is known. What is certain is that most of the Finns who inhabit various districts of the Tsardom to-day are not autochthonous, but came after the migration of other tribes of the same race. Who those tribes are we have no means of discovering, neither can we fix even approximately the date of the arrival of the primitive Bulgars who settled on the banks of the Volga and called themselves 'Volga-people,' which is obviously the sense of the word *Bulgar*. Examples of tribes thus describing themselves as 'people living on the banks of the river' are by no means rare. As Prof. Shishmanov points out, the Hindoos take their name from the Indus, the gypsies who call themselves 'sinte' owe their appellation to the same river. The Permiates still call themselves 'Kamiotir,' 'dwellers by the Kam.' Now the term *Bulgar* is, according to Dr. Shishmanov, whose view, to which I at first felt strongly opposed, I now unhesitatingly accept, a word meaning

'dweller by the Volga,' and is composed of the elements *Volga*+*ar*. My principal objection to that etymology arose from the change of *v* to *b*, an objection which, among many others equally strong, hinders me from endorsing the theory of the Slav school. For in Slav the change is phonetically inexplicable. In the Turko-Tartar family of languages, on the contrary, it is not merely possible but necessary. In Turkish dialects, with the exception of Osmanli and two others, the sound *v* is invariably changed into *p* or *b*. For instance, when they wish to reproduce the Russian name Vassily they change it in the Altai dialect into Pazylai. The Arabic word vakht assumes in the Kazan dialect the form of baghyt. In like manner the foreign word *Volga* could not but undergo a similar transformation in the mouths of the Turko-Tartar tribe who became known later on as the Bulgars : the initial *v* was necessarily changed into *b*. Even at the present day the Kirghizes, Prof. Shishmanov assures us, call the river *Bolga*, while some Tartars employ the word *Bulga*. The change of *o* into *u* is quite frequent in certain Turko-Tartar dialects, which Radloff, and after him Prof. Shishmanov, have enumerated.

The final result, then, at which Dr. Shishmanov arrives, a result which, if I may venture to say so, is borne out by numerous and powerful arguments drawn from every available source, is that the primitive form of the word was *bulgar*, and could not have

been anything else. The second element is the Turkish *ar* (=man, hero), which is found in some ancient Turkish inscriptions; and in the union of the two words the exigencies of vowel harmony—a phonetic law—are naturally complied with. Thus the two elements *bolga*+*är* became *bólga*+*ar*, *bólgar* and then, congruously with the law of vowel harmony, *bölgä*+*är*, *bölgär*, *bülgär* and finally *bülär*. A curious coincidence and a strong confirmation of this theory is found in the local Tartar name given to two villages, which are known to Russians of to-day as big and little *Bolgayari*. The Tartars call them *Bolgayir*, which is a logical combination of the essential elements of which the ancient designation *Bulgar* is composed: *Bolga*+*ir*, *ir* being the Kazan form of the Turkish word *ar* (=man, hero).

Bulgar therefore meant 'Volga man.' It is manifest consequently that this people must have dwelt on the shores of the Volga before their division into two branches, and it is equally clear that they lived there for a very long period before that event. This conclusion is borne out by the testimony of the Armenian historian Moses of Khoren, who states that in the second century B.C., during the reign of Arsaces, the Bulgars dwelt in the Caucasian mountains, whence they penetrated into Armenia. The Bulgarian hordes on their arrival on the banks of the middle Volga found a foreign race established there before them, and that fact would explain why they gave to the capital city of their Tsardom the